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IN BRITAIN**

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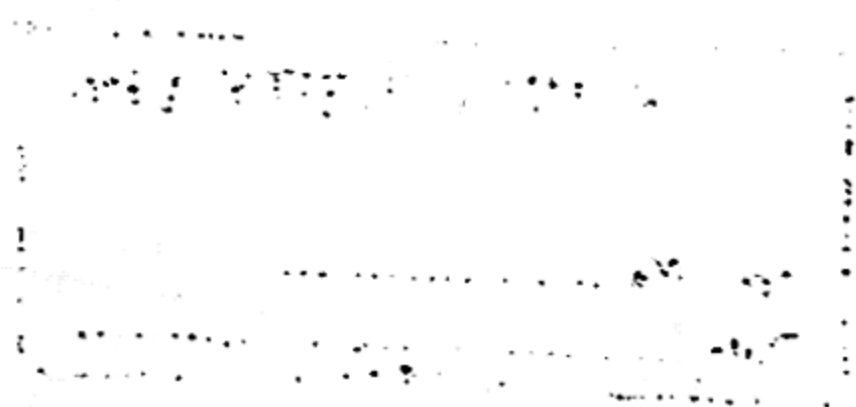
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HIGHER CIVIL SERVANTS IN BRITAIN

FROM 1870 TO THE PRESENT DAY

by

R. K. KELSALL



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PREFACE

THE present volume is based upon a study forming part of a wider research programme, the first main results of which were published in July 1954 in a symposium, *Social Mobility in Britain*, edited by D. V. Glass. The various contributions in that volume provide a background against which the present enquiry should be examined. They were concerned with *general* problems of social selection and differentiation in Britain. They showed the broad trends, during the last two generations, in educational opportunity, and the relation of that opportunity to movement on the social ladder. They also indicated some of the changes in educational opportunity which had resulted from the legislation of the 1940s, and some of the problems which still arise.

In the overall research plan of the Division of Sociological Research at the London School of Economics it was envisaged that these general studies should be followed by a series of more specific enquiries. It would be relevant, for example, to examine the social and psychological consequences of upward and downward social mobility. Again, much could be learnt from the study of stratified working groups, such as factories or offices, about the relationship between the nature of the hierarchy and the types of conflict arising between different strata.

In addition, studies of particular groups or professions were needed, particularly those whose place in the power structure of the community, or in the process of social mobility, could be regarded as 'critical'. It is into this last category of studies that the present work fits, as also does another enquiry now completed by a colleague. Dr. A. Tropp, in his forthcoming volume on the elementary school-teaching profession in England and Wales, also deals with a government-created profession, but one which contrasts sharply with the Higher Civil Service in important respects. Unlike the Higher Civil Service, which was to be recruited from the expensively-educated middle classes, the elementary teaching profession drew heavily upon the previously uneducated 'artisanate'. The teaching profession until this century obtained its entrants through a specially subsidized system of education and

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training. While the State thus provided an avenue of social mobility, it also effectively controlled the status of the profession. Entry to the Higher Division of the Home Civil Service after the Northcote-Trevelyan reforms was on an entirely different basis, and the implications of this difference both as regards the avenues to, and status of, the profession, are considered in the course of the present study.

One general warning may be given to the reader unfamiliar with the Civil Service. Many of the terms used in the present study to describe particular types of people, such as 'higher civil servants', 'those in the Administrative Class' or 'Assistant Secretaries', relate to groups the membership of which is somewhat fluctuating and uncertain *at the margin*. By the periodic processes of regrading specific posts, or modifying the upper or lower limits of the salary scales attaching to them, particular individuals may be brought within, or withdrawn from, the scope of one or more of the descriptive categories used. Too much weight should not, therefore, be given to small variations in the size of such groups over short periods of time. Nevertheless, the general reliability of the figures and the significance of the results are not materially affected by these minor, marginal fluctuations.

The study owes a great deal to encouragement from Professor Glass. Amongst others who were good enough to read the volume in draft and who made particularly helpful suggestions were Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders, Professor G. D. H. Cole, Professor Ginsberg, Professor T. H. Marshall and Mrs. Barbara Wootton. The task could not have been completed without information furnished by a very large number of people and institutions. Particular mention must be made of the headmasters of numerous schools, of the Registrars-General, of the First Division Association, and of the appropriate officials of the Treasury. The greatest burden of work inevitably fell on the Civil Service Commission, and thanks are due, above all, to Sir Percival Waterfield, Sir Paul Sinker, Mr. L. N. Helsby and their staff. Needless to say, no one but the author has any responsibility for the methods employed or the results obtained.

R. K. KELSALL

London School of Economics
December 1954

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INTRODUCTION

THE present enquiry forms part of a research programme made possible by a grant from the Nuffield Foundation to the London School of Economics. The purpose of this grant was to enable studies of social selection and differentiation in Great Britain to be undertaken, and the first approach was by an enquiry based on a sample of the population, occupation being taken as a prime indicator of social status. In such a sample both the number and the proportion of cases of members of the professions were naturally small, and of any *one* profession even smaller. The second approach was therefore to make a study of a number of professions, and the Higher Civil Service was chosen as one of these. This group, including as it does all the permanent heads of Government Departments and their principal deputies and assistants, obviously occupies a key position in the modern state, and possesses an importance quite out of proportion to the smallness of its numbers. For though political power may in theory rest with Ministers, who are responsible to Parliament for its exercise, the use of this power 'is to a large extent conditioned by the advice and assistance, even the direction, of the permanent officials'.¹

Studies of this important professional group have, of course, been undertaken before; but the unpublished data made available on the present occasion have made it possible to adopt many new lines of approach, as well as to establish conclusively the reliability or unreliability of widely-held beliefs about the social and Service origins of higher civil servants. There were, however, limits to what could be done with the available material, extensive though it was. Some indication may appropriately be given, therefore, of the reasons why certain topics are not treated in the present study.

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There are, in the first place, many matters highly relevant to this enquiry, but on which information could only be obtained by interviewing the subjects of study themselves. What, for instance, led them to choose the Civil Service as a career?² Would they do so again if they had to make the choice in the light of their later experience? Would they advise their sons or daughters to enter this profession? Were they tempted to leave the Service at any stage, and what deterred them from doing so? How do higher civil servants view their rôle in society? What careers did their siblings take up, and did any of them seriously consider entering the Service? The list of relevant questions, including those concerned with the interaction of bureaucracy and personality, could be extended almost indefinitely.³

Secondly, comparisons between the social origin and educational history of the members of this and other professions, and of higher civil servants here and in other countries, are to a large extent ruled out because the necessary studies on similar lines to the present one have not yet been undertaken. Bendix succeeded in obtaining certain data about 248 of 428 senior Federal administrators in the United States in 1940, but we do not know how applicable his results would be to the post-war Higher Civil Service.⁴ There have been investigations of the social background of public administrators in Germany, but not for the recent past. An enquiry into the Higher Civil Service in France is at present proceeding, and the results should make many interesting comparisons possible.⁵

Thirdly, there are certain questions to which attention would probably have been devoted had the present enquiry been undertaken at an earlier date, but which now seem to be of very much less significance. Notable amongst these is the degree of similarity or difference in social origin and educational history between senior civil servants on the one hand, and members of the Government on the other. Not very long ago this seemed to many writers to be an issue of crucial importance. Some spoke of an inter-war period distrust of the higher grades of the public service amongst members of the Labour Movement. 'It is attributable to the knowledge that the social origin of the higher officials marks them off from Labour, and the suspicion that they are out of sympathy with the working class or with progressive views.'⁶ An American

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observer thought that things could only work well when Ministers and civil servants shared the same background and held similar views, 'when, in other words, the bureaucracy is representative'.⁷ One higher civil servant himself appeared to share the same view. Speaking of the natural ease of intercourse and equality of tone that there used to be in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, he says 'this may seem of small moment; but in such a country as England a difference of social rank between two men who may have to transact important business together nearly every day for years is not an insignificant matter'.⁸ Most of those who foresaw increasing dangers in such a situation were in no doubt regarding the loyalty and political neutrality of higher civil servants; they were concerned with difficulties of a subtler character. If the private worlds of the Ministers and their principal advisers did not touch, the smooth working of the Governmental machine could no longer be guaranteed.⁹ To-day, however, these fears are felt to have been largely unfounded. A Labour Government has had a long period of office, in the course of which a large programme of controversial legislation has been completed with little apparent friction between higher officials and their political masters. Moreover, Labour Cabinets are by no means exclusively recruited from those of working or lower-middle class origin. For these reasons it has no longer seemed worth while to make a detailed comparison, in the present study, between the social background of Ministers on the one hand and higher civil servants on the other.

Finally, there are certain broad questions to which it will not be possible to provide an answer for a very long time to come, if at all. Take, for instance, the problem as to whether the State can obtain the ablest servants whilst at the same time satisfying the demands of its citizens for equality of opportunity. Some would say that these two objectives are not necessarily incompatible; others would argue that there has already been a decline in the quality of higher civil servants, associated with the increasing democratization of the Service. The information at our disposal is, and will probably remain, inadequate to resolve this issue. Professor Woodward claims that one of the most remarkable achievements of the English in the nineteenth century was to devise a mode of education which gave to the upper-middle class

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some of the traditional qualities of an old governing aristocracy. 'Can the process be continued among wider circles of English society,' he asks, 'or will the butter be too thinly spread?'¹⁰ The only possible answer would seem to be that we should continue the experiment and see how it works. We have no objective means of judging whether higher civil servants used to perform their tasks with greater or less success than they do now. When, in the present study, a measure of career success is needed, the time taken to reach particular ranks in the hierarchy has been used as a yardstick. When interpreting the results, however, it has always to be borne in mind that the decision to promote is taken by higher officials who may, consciously or otherwise, have a preference for men of their own type. These and other limiting factors do not make a study of the Higher Civil Service any less worth while; they merely provide the framework within which it has to be undertaken.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PURPOSE OF THE ENQUIRY

THIS study of the higher grades of the reformed Civil Service covers the period from 1870 to the present day. Why has 1870 been taken as a starting point? The reason is that only then were the last of the main principles accepted which make it possible to regard the Higher Civil Service as a profession. There had, of course, been other essential reforms before this. What we may reasonably regard as the first period of reform related to the gradual introduction of the recommendations of two Commissions reporting in the 1780s on public accounts and conditions in public offices. At that time many holders of public posts did not themselves discharge the duties of those posts, salaries were not paid out of monies voted by Parliament, and opportunities for fraud and speculation were widespread. By 1835 or so most sinecures had been abolished, and public offices were 'staffed by salaried pensionable officers, who were forbidden to have a financial interest in Government contracts or to utilize their official positions for making money by the exercise of agencies and by similar devices'.¹

Between that date and 1870, a second series of essential reforms was introduced. Appointment to public posts was, as it had always been, a matter of patronage, much of which was by now vested in the Treasury. Political influence was therefore necessary in order to secure appointment to a vacancy; the posts were virtually permanent; there were no tests of fitness, the only safeguard being dismissal for incompetence during the probationary period of a year or so. The earlier reforms had greatly increased the efficiency of public offices; the most obvious next step to reduce the mounting costs of Government was by an improvement

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in the ability of the personnel in these offices. There was no real question, at this stage, of doing away with patronage, which was an important element in the party political system. Patronage could, however, be regulated in the interests of efficiency. The Treasury tried to experiment along these lines in 1834, by having three nominated candidates for each vacancy and distinguishing between them on the basis of a Departmental examination; but this was discontinued in 1841. Then, in November 1853, Sir Stafford Northcote and Sir Charles Trevelyan submitted to Gladstone their *Report on the Organization of the Permanent Civil Service*. This proposed that posts in the Service should be divided into two categories, 'intellectual and mechanical'; that both grades should be recruited by open competitive examinations instead of by patronage; and that promotion should be by merit and not mere seniority. A storm of controversy ensued; the revolutionary changes proposed were not made; but a Civil Service Commission was established in 1855 for the purpose of conducting the examinations and personal enquiries about candidates previously undertaken by individual Departments. When the position was reviewed by the Select Committee on Civil Service Appointments in 1860, it was found that in nine-tenths of the cases the Departments were using the examinations merely to exclude those nominees who failed to reach even a low minimum standard, and not to provide any competition for posts. Moreover, in the few cases where limited competition was in force, it was largely a sham; for the policy of keeping 'a reserve of two very dull boys to run in competition with the friend whom you wished to appoint' was often adopted.² As a result of this criticism, recruitment to posts within the patronage of the Treasury was subsequently modified so as to provide at least a small measure of genuine competition between nominees. It was also a step forward when, by the Superannuation Act of 1859, it was laid down that superannuation should only be granted to those who held a Civil Service Commission certificate, unless they held their appointments directly from the Crown.

In the meantime events outside the Service were strengthening the hands of those who supported the Northcote-Trevelyan proposals. In the course of the Crimean War administrative incompetence on a massive scale was exposed. Writerships in the Indian

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Civil Service were, after 1855, filled by examinations, on a competitive basis, open to all British-born subjects of appropriate age. And fundamental changes had been taking place at Oxford and Cambridge, whereby systematic examinations were introduced for degrees and for the award of Fellowships. Moreover, the electoral support of the heads of upper and upper-middle class families without backstairs political influence who wanted more careers provided for their well-educated sons, was of some value. For it would be a mistake to assume that the reformers intended to make the Service more democratic. The proposed examination for the higher posts, with classics and mathematics as the main subjects, would only recruit those from the social strata monopolizing the great public schools and universities. Finally, after the 1867 extension of the franchise, political patronage ceased to be worth preserving.³

Gladstone's Order in Council of 1870 was based upon the Northcote-Trevelyan proposals of 1853; and although it was some time before the principles of reorganization were applied to all the main Departments, 1870 may reasonably be taken as a starting point for a study of the Higher Civil Service as a profession. For the Order in Council represented the completion of the reforms we have been discussing. It was now recognized, at least in principle, that there was a body of full-time, salaried officials, engaged on responsible work of broadly the same character, and to be recruited in future from the *élite* of the universities. True, they were working in separate Departments between which there might be little, if any, interchange of staff; but the acceptance of the principle of common recruitment was the real beginning of a unified Service. In future, young men would seek to enter the Home Civil Service, not just the Treasury or the Colonial Office; a disparate collection of posts had become a profession.⁴

The purpose of the present study of this key profession is to provide answers to questions of the following kind. From which social strata is the Higher Administrative Class now being drawn, and what changes have taken place in this respect over the last eighty years or so? We already know in very general terms that, both before and after the Civil Service reforms of the nineteenth century, middle-class penetration of what had previously been an aristocratic preserve revolutionized the position.⁵ Are we

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witnessing a second revolution, in that the hold of the upper-middle class on the higher administrative posts is now seriously jeopardized? How far have the developments that have taken place been the result of policy changes either in the recruitment of direct entrants, or in the promotion of those originally entering the lower classes of the Service? To what extent have the fathers of senior officials themselves been members of this or closely allied occupations? What has been the relationship between the social origin, education and upbringing of higher civil servants on the one hand, and their career-success on the other? Has there been any marked change in the status of their profession?

At first sight it might appear that the answers to at least some of these questions are available either in publications dealing specifically with the Civil Service, or in those containing biographical material about individual civil servants. Unfortunately, however, the account of the Higher Civil Service now and in the past that can be obtained from published sources does not provide a satisfactory answer to any of these questions. Several studies of the profession have been published within the last ten years or so. One of the best of these was written before the war by a senior and well-informed inside observer, and the relative paucity of statistical material it contains forms a striking proof of the inadequacy of the sources on which all workers in this field have hitherto had to depend.⁶ A few years later another survey of considerable merit was published in the United States; but in dealing with the recent past this, too, had to take the form of personal impressions unsupported by figures.⁷ A later book on the subject added little to what was already known.⁸ The most recent study contains some new figures but, as will be explained later, these do not fill the main gaps.⁹

A brief glance at published sources of biographical information will show their deficiencies for the present purpose. *Who's Who 1950* contains biographies of all those who held the rank of Secretary or Deputy Secretary at the end of the previous year. If we needed to know age, education, year of entry to the Civil Service and first rank held, one of these particulars is missing in 59% of these biographies, and more than one in a further 15%. If method of entry (e.g. open competition) were also required, the *Who's Who* particulars would be insufficient in almost all

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cases. Father's occupation is usually only given in these biographies when the father happened to be in the Church. The proportion of those of *lower* rank than Deputy Secretary in whom we are interested, to whom any reference is made at all, is relatively small. The position was slightly better in this last respect in 1939; and it is also largely since then that the convention of including only a laconic and comparatively useless entry has become widespread amongst senior officials, in striking contrast to the voluminous material supplied by earlier generations, when it was a regular practice to record all stages in one's career since first joining the Service.

There are, of course, certain other standard works of reference from which similar information can sometimes be obtained. These include Kelly's *Handbook to the Titled, Landed and Official Classes*; Burke's *Peerage*; and Debrett's *Peerage*. Though a few gaps can be filled in by using these reference works, the range of people covered is, of course, narrower than in the case of *Who's Who*. For exceptionally distinguished civil servants of the past, fuller information is available in the *Dictionary of National Biography*; but here the number of civil servants thought worthy of inclusion is very small indeed. The number of published individual biographies of civil servants is also surprisingly small; those that have appeared are extremely useful in many ways, but they can do little to fill any of the statistical *lacunae* with which we are concerned.

Biographical material of a kind is also to be found in the official lists published by certain Departments, notably the Foreign Office (and, at an earlier period, the India Office). The War Office imposes restrictions on public access to recent issues of the Departmental List; the Post Office allows access to current and past issues of Establishment Books. The qualifications for inclusion in these lists vary considerably; in some cases the scope is wide enough to include temporary shorthand-typists, in others only established civil servants of senior rank are covered. There is similar variety in the particulars given; some include reference to education, others do not. Of the officials in whom we are interested only a comparatively small proportion appear at all, because so few Departments publish a record of this type; and even in the cases covered, the information given is usually inadequate in several important respects.

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Valuable information relating to certain officials is to be found in the *Annual Reports* of the Civil Service Commission for the years up to and including 1938. In particular, they include lists giving the names and certain educational particulars of successful candidates in open competitions (and post-1918 reconstruction competitions) for entry to the Administrative Class. These 'nominal lists' are useful in two ways. In conjunction with the *Imperial Calendar* they make it possible to determine which members of the Administrative Class entered by this particular route (and their order of merit in that examination). They also enable one to analyse the secondary schools and universities of successful entrants by this route over different periods of time. The nominal list for 1939 is available, in typescript, for consultation by approved enquirers at the Commission's office; subsequently the open competition was suspended until after the war. Publication of these lists has been resumed since 1949.

The *Imperial Calendar* provides details of the surname and initials, rank, salary-range and Department of most civil servants every year; no biographical details are given. In many cases, however, only part of an official's past career in the Service can be traced by reference to back numbers of this *Calendar*. One reason is that not all civil servants were included at all dates; junior clerical, technical and professional grades were often omitted, as were some more senior officials (e.g. Inspectors of Taxes). Another reason is that the *Calendar* was not published at all from 1921-4 inclusive, in 1942 or in 1944; these gaps can sometimes be filled by referring to Whitaker's *Almanack*, but this provides no index of persons, and in any case covers a much narrower range of civil servants than the *Calendar* itself. A third difficulty arises in cases of a change of name on marriage or for other reasons; no key to such changes is provided.

The works so far mentioned, then, are the only published sources from which, if the surname and initials of a senior civil servant are known, but nothing more, particulars of some of the kinds described can sometimes be found. Obviously if school, college or past profession is also known, it may be possible to supplement this information by reference to published registers of various other types; but such possibilities are extremely limited.

Figures relating to the Civil Service are even more disappoint-

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ing. *Annual Reports*¹⁰ of the Civil Service Commissioners provide figures of the intake into the Administrative Class in particular years, but these are not as useful as might appear. Their main drawback is that (except in the case of open competition entrants) the people concerned cannot be identified by name, so that their social origin, educational history and past and later Civil Service career cannot be traced. A further difficulty is that the figure of those 'promoted' to the Administrative Class from other classes of the Service in any given year does not include, after 1922, those promotions from the ranks taking place departmentally without reference to the Commission, of which there is no record. There is, in addition, a gap in the published figures of intake between the *83rd Report* of the Commissioners (for 1938) and the *84th* (for 1941-9); and during the period covered by that gap, as will be explained later, promotions took place on a very large scale. The *84th Report*, it may be noticed, compares the proportions of successful and unsuccessful open competition candidates in certain years attending secondary schools of various types and the different universities; this is the first and last occasion on which any information of this kind has been provided relating to *unsuccessful* candidates.

Official figures regularly issued showing the size of the Civil Service do not subdivide the Administrative Class; this subdivision can be done by anyone with the patience to work through the *Imperial Calendar* page by page, but a knowledge of Service classification in marginal cases is needed for this purpose. Royal Commissions are, of course, furnished with some figures more useful than those normally obtainable. Recently Mr. Monck has published Treasury figures subdividing the Administrative Class and showing method of entry in two categories.¹¹ Unfortunately, however, this twofold classification does not enable promotion from the ranks to be distinguished from transfer from other classes.

One purpose in giving this account of the available published information on the Higher Civil Service in the recent past has been to show how much essential material is lacking. A few outstanding examples of the gaps in our knowledge may be given. The method of entry to the Administrative Class of the present members of the Higher Civil Service, or of their counterparts at earlier dates, is not known except in such general terms that true

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promotion from the ranks of the Service cannot be separated from other methods of entry. Nothing is known about the types of school or the universities to which they or their earlier counterparts went; this information is available for open competition entrants, but has never been published or analysed except by the years, or groups of years, in which the competitions were held. No information exists for any date regarding the social origin (measured by father's occupation or in any other way) of higher civil servants as a group. No study has apparently ever been made of the success of the pre-war Administrative Class open competition in terms of the subsequent Civil Service careers of those entrants whose marks were high or low. And no statistical evidence has been produced to show the success of the pre-war interview as an estimate of future Civil Service career success, or to indicate how the school or social background of those excluded because of the interview differed from that of their fellow competitors who, but for their interview success, would not have been offered a Civil Service post at all. No study has ever been made of the extent and nature of 'wastage' amongst open competition entrants, in the sense of failure to complete a Civil Service career of normal length. No adequate survey exists of the effects of changes in the policy and practice of recruitment to the Administrative Class since the reforms of the 1870s showing, for instance, what changes have occurred in the extent of promotion from the ranks, and how far they have altered the social structure of the Higher Civil Service as a whole.

These, then, are some of the main questions with which the present enquiry is concerned. In what follows, full use has been made both of all the available published material and of unpublished material provided for the enquiry by the Civil Service Commission, the Treasury, the Registrars-General, headmasters and many others. Without their co-operation in supplying unpublished data, it would have been impossible to deal adequately with any of the problems mentioned.

Before proceeding to explain how the necessary material for the present study was assembled, there is one other matter to which attention should be drawn. The prevailing, though quite false, impression that a good deal is known about the social and educational background of higher civil servants, may be partly due to

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misleading generalizations that have been published from time to time by writers who were not themselves civil servants. These misleading statements have usually been of two kinds. First, information about the secondary schools and universities attended by open competition entrants has been extracted from Civil Service Commission *Reports* and then analysed, and the impression has been conveyed that this provided a picture of the whole Administrative Class, as though open competition were the sole means of entry. Secondly, the corresponding information for particular groups of senior civil servants (e.g. Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries) has been extracted from *Who's Who* biographies and analysed, the results then forming the basis for general statements about the group, regardless of the fact that school and university details are sometimes missing from such biographies, and that there may be no biography at all for some of those of the appropriate rank.

One example may be given of the ease with which inaccurate statements on this subject gain currency and come to be accepted and quoted in textbooks. On 4th August 1937, Professor John Hilton gave an address to the Liberal Summer School, his general theme being that far too many important jobs, particularly in the public service, were held by men who had been to public schools. He illustrated his remarks by giving figures of bishops, county court judges and home civil servants who had and who had not been to such schools.¹² These latter figures, given on a public occasion by an eminent social scientist, not unnaturally found their way into at least one textbook, and have probably been accepted by many students as a reliable guide to the social origin of home civil servants at that date.¹³ Yet the figures, in the form in which they appeared in print, are inaccurate and misleading. 'Of 210 home civil servants receiving over £1,000 a year,' Professor Hilton is reported to have said, '152 have old school ties, and 70 of them have the sort that are looked on as really posh.' Where the basic figure of 210 came from was not at all clear, for in the Home *Administrative* Class alone at that date there must have been more than twice that number of people 'receiving over £1,000 a year'. If *all* home civil servants with salaries above that level had been taken (including those in the professional and scientific classes), their numbers would have been very much

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larger, and the proportion having a public school origin would almost certainly have been very much smaller. Although the statement itself gave no clue to this, a search revealed that identical figures had, in fact, appeared in print six years previously. On that occasion, however, their author, Professor Tawney, had made three points clear. First, they related to the year 1926-7. Secondly, these 210 home civil servants earning more than £1,000 a year were merely those members of a larger group (comprising 455 people) in respect of whom information was available from published sources. Thirdly, the universe was not the Home Civil Service as a whole, but twenty Departments forming part of it.¹⁴ In a pamphlet issued in 1943 later figures, for 1938-9, are given. They are, however, on exactly the same basis as Professor Tawney's earlier ones, and are subject to the same limitations; this time information was available for only 271 out of 952 home civil servants receiving £1,000 a year and upwards in 20 Departments.¹⁵ Without the necessary qualifications either set of figures could, and did, become highly misleading; as reported to have been given by Professor Hilton and subsequently quoted in a textbook, they purported to relate to a later year and a wider group than was in fact the case. And this is only one example of many where similar Civil Service generalizations, based on equally unrepresentative data, have appeared in print and remained unchallenged.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ASSEMBLY OF BASIC DATA

IN terms of the main sources of information on which they depend and the form in which the results can be analysed, the present enquiry falls into a number of sections. Some of these are sufficiently self-contained to form a chapter of their own, others can readily be woven into the fabric of chapters predominantly relating to different sections. It may be useful, however, to begin by providing a list of the sections themselves.

(1) One part of the enquiry consisted of an historical survey of the main aspects of recruitment policy and practice since the reforms of the 1870s. For this, reliance had to be placed primarily on an exhaustive analysis of the reports and published evidence of commissions and committees on the Civil Service; of the *Annual Reports* of the Civil Service Commissioners; of biographies of civil servants; and of books and articles about the Civil Service. This published information was, however, supplemented by talks with retired civil servants and others with specialized knowledge, and by unpublished statistical material supplied by the Treasury and the Civil Service Commission to fill in gaps in the recently published statistical series.

(2) Another section of the enquiry was a study of those constituting the Higher Civil Service at three dates—1929, 1939 and 1950. These civil servants were identified by name in order that as much relevant information as possible about them could be assembled. The published data being totally inadequate, very great reliance had to be placed on unpublished material supplied by the Civil Service Commission, the Treasury, the Registrars-General and others; in order to fill some of the gaps still remaining, headmasters and civil servants and their relatives were sometimes approached.

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(3) Direct entrants by the open, and post-1918 reconstruction, competitions in the thirty-one-year period 1909-39 formed the subject of a group of studies in which the association between career-success (measured by the time taken to reach specified ranks) and other factors—type of school attended, marks awarded for written work and for the *viva voce* in the open competition—was examined.

(4) Partly as a by-product of the previous section of the enquiry, 'wastage' amongst direct entrants by open competition in this thirty-one-year period was analysed, and its nature and extent were determined. Help in tracing entrants of this period who were no longer in the Service in 1950 was given by the First Division Association, by the Establishment Officers of many Departments, by headmasters of schools and bursars of colleges, by colleagues and by the civil servants themselves.

(5) A limited study of *unsuccessful* open competition candidates was made possible by the agreement of the Civil Service Commission to allow certain information to be extracted relating to one year, 1938. The Commissioners could not, however, agree to this being done for more than one year, or to a follow-up survey of unsuccessful candidates being made; the latter study would, in their view, have involved a breach of the rule that those failing this examination must not be identified by name to the public (e.g. to headmasters), even if anonymity were secured in the figures ultimately published.

(6) In the case of very recent entrants, who came in by the open competitions of the four years 1949-52, the Commissioners supplied information on last school and university attended, date and place of birth, and father's occupation. This, when supplemented by birth registration data, enabled useful comparisons to be made with the results of other sections of the enquiry.

(7) In order to compare the type of people reaching the very top of the Service over a longer period of time, six key posts were chosen, and the occupants of these posts at four widely separated dates compared. The dates selected (1888, 1912, 1929, 1950) were roughly twenty years apart, and the earlier ones were chosen because these particular civil servants had, in the course of their evidence before commissions or committees, given information about themselves not obtainable elsewhere (particularly about

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their method of entry to the Administrative Class or its equivalent). Published sources were supplemented by unpublished birth registration data from the Registrars-General.

The methods used in assembling the basic data for sections (2), (3) and (4) above must be more fully explained; but first of all some account must be given of the principles on which the limits of the professional group were defined, of the meaning of the term 'Higher Civil Service' in the present study.

(a) The enquiry was to be confined to those permanent civil servants whose functions were *administrative*, and who were not required to possess specialized knowledge or experience in other fields as a condition of holding their present appointment. Some of them had, of course, been specialists at an earlier career stage; but it was not essential that they should have been. Others had scored high marks in entrance examinations where they had specialized in a particular subject group; but a wide choice had been offered to them, and they had not been required to show ability in any specified subject. Those who had entered by the Administrative Class open competition, but had then been posted to appointments in the Public Record Office or one of the museums, were not regarded as administrators. (b) The Foreign, Diplomatic and Consular branches of the Service were excluded from the enquiry. Their inclusion would have so greatly increased the number of cases, that the Civil Service Commission could not have supplied the essential unpublished data within a reasonable period of time. Moreover, both the system of ranks and recruitment procedure are materially different in these branches of the Service, which would have had to form the subject of a separate study. (c) The need to work within the limits set by the capacity of the Civil Service Commission to extract from the files material relating to individual cases, also made it necessary to confine attention to those above a certain rank. In the hierarchy of the Civil Service, authority to take policy decisions does not normally attach to those below the rank of Assistant Secretary.¹ The main section of the enquiry therefore relates to individuals of this or higher rank. These higher civil servants comprise Secretaries (S.) (normally Heads of Departments); Deputy Secretaries (D.S.); Under-Secretaries (U.S.), together with Principal Assistant Secretaries (P.A.S.); and Assistant Secretaries (A.S.). In some cases

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information could be obtained for all the *senior* members of the group but not for the Assistant Secretaries. In the historical sections of the enquiry, on the other hand, much of the discussion relates to the Administrative Class (or its earlier counterparts) as a whole, and therefore includes the ranks now known as Principal and Assistant Principal.

Having defined the Higher Civil Service in this way, the next step was to go through the *Imperial Calendar* for 1950 page by page and identify by surname, initials, salary-range, rank and Department, all those individuals apparently fulfilling the requisite conditions. There proved to be 1045 of them, and when the same procedure was applied to the *Imperial Calendars* for 1939 and 1929, 473 and 296 higher civil servants of these earlier years were identified for comparison.² It should, of course, be emphasized that personal judgement inevitably influenced both the selection of individuals and their rank-allocation in marginal cases. No two people would have been likely to reach identical results, and it is not surprising that there should be small differences between these and official Treasury figures subsequently published. The important thing, however, is that the same criteria and the same personal judgement have been used in each of the three years 1950, 1939 and 1929, so that comparisons between the position at those three dates can legitimately be drawn.

The next stages in the assembly of basic data can best be explained by illustrating the procedure used for the 1950 group; similar methods were adopted in the case of the 1939 and 1929 groups, though the greater difficulties encountered sometimes made it necessary to be content with less information. Having identified the individuals by surname, initials and 1950 status and Department, the laborious process was begun of tracing their Civil Service careers as far back as the information contained in earlier issues of the *Imperial Calendar* would allow, supplemented by Whitaker's *Almanack* for missing years, and by *Who's Who* and Departmental *Lists* for those with usable entries in these publications. An unexpected difficulty was encountered here, for it was found that even the British Museum Library did not have an unbroken series of back numbers of the *Imperial Calendar*. Through the courtesy of the Librarian at the War Office, however, a complete set was temporarily assembled there by borrowing missing issues.

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TABLE I

DEPARTMENTAL DISTRIBUTION OF HIGHER CIVIL SERVANTS,
1929, 1939, 1950

<i>Department or group of Departments</i>	1929		1939		1950	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Treasury and Cabinet Office	24	8.1	37	7.8	84	8.0
Admiralty	14	4.7	19	4.0	34	3.3
Air Ministry	17	5.7	32	6.8	31	3.0
War Office	17	5.7	25	5.3	35	3.3
Agriculture and Fisheries	9	3.0	17	3.6	31	3.0
Labour	18	6.1	30	6.3	61	5.8
Trade	18	6.1	32	6.8	100	9.6
Transport	4	1.4	12	2.5	37	3.5
Education	18	6.1	22	4.6	32	3.1
Health	19	6.4	24	5.1	39	3.7
Home Office	10	3.4	29	6.1	37	3.5
Customs and Excise	13	4.4	15	3.2	15	1.4
Inland Revenue	14	4.7	19	4.0	26	2.5
Post Office	15	5.1	27	5.7	31	3.0
All Scottish	21	7.1	26	5.5	55	5.3
All Dominion and Colonial	35	11.8	50	10.6	75	7.2
Food	—	—	—	—	39	3.7
Fuel and Power	—	—	—	—	44	4.2
National Insurance	—	—	—	—	27	2.6
Supply	—	—	—	—	60	5.7
Other Departments	30	10.1	57	12.1	152	14.5
Total	296		473		1045	

At the same time the *Annual Reports* of the Civil Service Commissioners were consulted, for the years 1909–38 (together with the unpublished *Report* for 1939), and extracts were made of the surnames, initials, educational and order-of-merit particulars of all successful candidates in the open competition for the Administrative Class and the corresponding reconstruction competitions of the post-1918 years.

The Civil Service careers of these successful candidates were then traced *forwards* by reference to subsequent issues of the *Imperial Calendar*. Some of them could be traced as far as the 1950 *Calendar*, and many of these proved to be members of our 1950

TABLE 2

ROUTES OF ORIGINAL ENTRY TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE CLASS OF THOSE HOLDING CERTAIN RANKS IN
1929, 1939 AND 1950

<i>Date and Rank</i>	<i>By Administrative Class open competition (including post-1918 reconstruction competitions)</i>		<i>By other forms of direct entry from outside</i>		<i>By Transfer from other Branches and Services</i>		<i>By Promotion from the Ranks</i>		<i>All Routes (the number of women included in each total is shown in brackets)</i>
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
1929:									
S. and D.S.	26	60.5	—	—	2	4.6	4	9.3	43 (0)
U.S. and P.A.S.	45	57.7	—	—	3	3.8	11	14.1	78 (2)
A.S.	96	54.8	—	—	4	2.3	35	20.0	175 (1)
All of the rank of A.S. and above	167	56.4	43	14.5	9	3.1	50	16.9	296 (3)
1939:									
S. and D.S.	35	64.8	11	20.4	—	—	5	9.2	54 (0)
U.S. and P.A.S.	78	62.4	12	9.6	3	2.4	24	19.2	125 (1)
A.S.	161	54.8	32	10.9	4	1.4	68	23.1	294 (2)
All of the rank of A.S. and above	274	57.9	55	11.6	7	1.5	97	20.5	473 (3)
1950:									
S. and D.S.	71	74.0	6	6.2	—	—	14	14.6	96 (1)
U.S. and P.A.S.	139	58.9	7	3.0	2	0.8	64	27.1	236 (5)
A.S.	246	34.5	14	2.0	11	1.5	297	41.6	713 (23)
All of the rank of A.S. and above	456	43.6	27	2.6	13	1.2	375	35.9	1045 (29)

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group of higher civil servants. Others disappeared from the *Calendar* before this date was reached, and a special section of the enquiry took the form of studying this 'wastage' to see whether their disappearance was due to death, retirement, or entry into another occupation; and, in this last case, what field of activity was involved. Unpublished data were needed for this 'wastage' investigation.

There were certain other types of published information which, though only available for, or applicable to, certain higher civil servants, were thought worth recording and analysing. One of these was the marks awarded for written work and for the interview to successful candidates in the open competition for entry to the Administrative Class. These marks were issued to the press when the results of each competition were made known. One advantage of the Higher Civil Service as a subject of enquiry is the existence of a hierarchy of ranks. From the social investigator's point of view this means that the extent of career success can be measured with some degree of objectivity. One has only to think of the problems that arise in attempting to define and measure success in other professions (e.g. medicine) to realize the value of this factor. In the case of entrants by the open competitions of 1909-39, we can relate the rank they attained and the time they took to reach it both to the type of school at which they were educated, and to the marks they were awarded on entry for written work and for their interview.

Except in the special case of father's occupation, to be discussed shortly, this was as far as matters could be carried by reference to published sources alone. The next step was to supply the Civil Service Commission with the surname, initials and earliest *Imperial Calendar* particulars of all those who had *not* entered the Administrative Class by open competition, in order that their original Civil Service entry forms might be located and certain information extracted.³ The particulars the Commissioners agreed to supply corresponded broadly to those already available in published form for open competition entrants to the Administrative Class. They were to comprise first Civil Service post held; last school, and any university, attended; and type of post held immediately before joining the Civil Service. Unfortunately the time needed to identify these individuals, find their original entry

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forms, and extract the necessary details, proved to be much longer than was at first anticipated. Delays became so serious that certain sacrifices had to be made in the interests of completing the enquiry. In the case of Assistant Secretaries of the 1939 and 1929 groups who had *not* entered the Administrative Class by open competition, it was therefore decided only to ask for method of entry into the Administrative Class, and not the other particulars. Dates of birth of past and present civil servants identified in the enquiry were supplied either by the Commission or by the Treasury.

At an early stage in the enquiry it was found that the Commissioners were reluctant to extract information from pre-war application forms relating to father's occupation. The usefulness of the material in the Commission's possession would, in any case, have been impaired by several factors. That question must often have been answered by such entries as 'retired' or 'dead', or by descriptions too vague for classification, and the information would have related to very varying periods of the candidate's life. To the extent that this gap in our knowledge was subsequently filled in other ways, the data used were at least not subject to these particular limitations.

Father's occupation was sought, and ultimately found, for virtually all the senior civil servants in our 1950, 1939 and 1929 groups; Assistant Secretaries were, however, excluded, as the work involved in attempting to cover them as well would have been too great. The method adopted was roughly as follows. The fullest information possible relating to the birth and parentage of the 632 people involved was assembled from published sources such as *Who's Who*, *Kelly's Handbook*, *Burke's Peerage*, *Debrett's Peerage*, school registers, and newspaper obituaries. In this way it was often possible to supplement the bare date of birth by one or more of the following particulars: father's full name, mother's maiden name, place of birth, or place of early schooling. Where place of birth or place of early schooling was known as well as father's full name, it was sometimes possible to trace father's occupation at or near the date of the child's birth by reference to old local directories, of which the British Museum Library contains a very fine collection. Failing this, the particulars were secured by obtaining the necessary birth registration data from

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the Registrar-General of the appropriate country. The birth-places of our higher civil servants were so distributed that, quite apart from those born further afield, information had to be sought from the Registrars-General of England and Wales, Scotland, Eire, the Isle of Man and Guernsey. Sometimes a combination of local directories and birth registration data was needed to overcome vagueness in the occupational description. Occasionally a direct approach was made to the civil servant concerned or, where he was no longer alive, to relatives (one of whom was contacted through a local postmaster). The whole procedure necessarily took a very long time. It has made available, however, social origin information for the senior ranks of the Higher Civil Service in 1950, 1939 and 1929 of a more complete and direct character than exists for any other professional group.

CHAPTER THREE

ROUTES OF ENTRY TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE CLASS: PROMOTION FROM THE RANKS

THERE has always been some possibility, however restricted, of entering the Administrative Class or its earlier counterparts by promotion from the lower ranks of the Service. Two questions should be answered before proceeding to examine the appropriate sections of the higher administrative group in 1929, 1939 and 1950. (1) What were these lower ranks, how were they recruited, and what kind of people were found in them? (2) What provision was made for promotion from these ranks to the Administrative Class, and how effective was it in practice?

(1) Though some sort of ranking of civil servants within their own Departments is found at an early date, the modern system of dividing the Service into classes each with separate recruitment arrangements has its origin in the Order in Council of 1870 directing that all vacancies in a given list of officers should normally be filled by open competition, and the subsequent Treasury regulations providing for two kinds of open examinations, for men of university standard to fill the higher posts, and for others to fill the lower. As a result of these arrangements, the lower posts came to be filled in the following way.

Boy writers and men writers were taken on for mechanical clerical work, the former being recruited between 14 and 18 and discharged on reaching the age of 19, the latter having a minimum recruitment age of 18 and little security of tenure. The Playfair Commission recommended in 1875 that this type of work should continue to be done by people recruited in this way, though their

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names should be changed to Boy Copyists and Men Copyists. Above them, however, was to be a Lower Division, comprising Boy Clerks and Men Clerks; the Boy Clerks were to be recruited between 15 and 17 by a more difficult examination than that of the Boy Copyists, though they, too, were to be discharged at 19 unless they had succeeded before then in a limited competition for Men Clerkships. The Men Clerks of the Lower Division were to have permanent appointments, and outsiders were to be recruited by open competition between 17 and 20. These arrangements were put into operation in 1876; and, except for an extension of the age of discharge both of Boy Copyists and Boy Clerks from 19 to 20 in 1887, this position remained unaltered until the Ridley Commission reported in 1888. They recommended that there should only be one class of boys doing clerical work, to be called Boy Clerks. When this proposal was eventually carried out in 1896, however, the title of Boy Copyist was used, and recruitment ages became 15-18, discharge continuing to be at 20 unless they had succeeded in obtaining other posts in the Service by open competition. In the meantime the grievances of Men Writers and Men Copyists, who claimed that their posts should be permanent and that much of the work they did was similar to that of the Lower Division, had led the Ridley Commission to recommend that no further people of this type should be recruited to temporary appointments. Instead, from 1889 onwards, a small but expanding class of Abstractors or Assistant Clerks was recruited from temporary personnel in moribund grades for work above the level of copying but below the standard of the Lower Division (renamed the Second Division in 1890). By 1896 virtually all the suitable Men Copyists had been absorbed in this way, and Assistant Clerks were in future therefore recruited by competitions limited to Boy Clerks or Boy Copyists between 19 and 21 (these limits were, in 1908-9, reduced to 17 and 18, Boy Clerks henceforth being discharged at 18). When the Boy Copyists had their title changed again to Boy Clerk in 1902, their maximum age on entry was reduced from 18 to 17, and the system was begun of awarding marks for periods of approved service to Boy Clerks taking part in the open competitions for Second Division and certain other posts.

By the early years of the present century, therefore, when the

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oldest of the promotees in our 1950 group were beginning their Civil Service careers, the position was roughly as follows. There were a number of general classes of men's¹ or boy's clerical work, common to many Departments; and for each of these classes the normal method of entry, for those under 20 and not already in the Service, was by one of a number of open competitions. Lowest in status, pay and the educational standard of the examination was the class of temporary Boy Clerks, recruited at 15-16. Some eight or nine hundred of these were, as a result of the examination, added to the register each year, and between two and three thousand tended to be in employment at any one time. Next came the class of Assistant Clerks, of whom there were also between two and three thousand; recruitment was limited to those already in the Service aged 17-18. In both these cases the duty of those appointed was to undertake relatively routine clerical work, inferior to that for which clerks of the Second Division (numbering some 4,000) were recruited between the ages of 17 and 20. Members of the subsidiary classes could rise, by means of competitive examinations, to the Second Division; about a quarter of those in that Division had originally been temporary Boy Clerks. In most offices there were a certain number of staff posts to which the best of the Second Division Clerks expected to be promoted when a suitable vacancy arose. These were, however, in a different category from the Class 1 posts for which the most difficult open examination was provided to take some 25 university men every year into a select class of between four and five hundred people.

Apart from these general classes, particular Departments, notably the Post Office, recruited substantial numbers of relatively unskilled workers for other duties. Boys were taken on at 14 to deliver telegrams and do messenger work in the large post offices. There were sometimes as many as 16,000 of them, some of whom subsequently became postmen, counter clerks, sorting clerks or telegraphists, and avenues of promotion were available to Supplementary Clerkships (the Post Office equivalent of the Second Division) and staff posts. Special classes also existed in a number of other Departments, of which only a few need be mentioned. There were, for instance, outdoor men engaged in customs and excise duties, and port clerks and customs clerks, appointed in a

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variety of ways, all of whom, apart from opportunities of rising to inspectorships, had a ladder of promotion to Second Division and staff posts and, prior to a reorganization in 1909, even to the highest positions in the secretariat. Another development had been that in certain Departments work had arisen of a character which was held to require an educational standard somewhere between that laid down for direct entry into the Second Division and into the First Division. With the aim of recruiting the best of the public school boys not proceeding to a university to such posts as the 'junior appointments' in the Supply and Accounting Departments of the Admiralty, or the responsible work of the Estate Duty and Tax Surveying Branches of the Inland Revenue, another open competition had recently been created (though the Admiralty had been recruiting such people since the 1890s) for an Intermediate Class, with entry age limits of 18 to 19½. Since 1906 an annual average of 52 boys had been recruited to this new class numbering some 1,200 men, about 40% of whom had entered by this examination.

All these classes, it should be noted, whether they were general to the Service or special to particular Departments, had two features in common in their entry requirements. First, it was not necessary to have had any technical training except possibly of an elementary character before being appointed to the junior positions in the class. Secondly, if examinations were held, they were not of university honours standard. Where movement took place from any of these classes into Class 1, therefore, it can properly be treated, from our point of view, as promotion from the ranks rather than transfer from a professional or technical branch of the Service. Some of the men concerned did, of course, acquire technical knowledge, or obtain professional or other qualifications, before reaching the Administrative Class in this way; but such knowledge or qualification was not essential *either* for admission to the junior posts in the class they originally entered, *or* as a requirement of later appointment within the administrative field. The point needs to be emphasized, for this is the basis on which, in the present enquiry, promotion and transfer are distinguished from one another, and statements about the Civil Service origin of the members of the higher administrative staff in 1929, 1939 and 1950 must be understood in this sense.

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What kind of people predominated in these lower ranks of the Civil Service? Boy messengers in the Post Office recruited at 14 can hardly have had a secondary education before joining the Service. Of the 265 Boy Clerks offered appointments as a result of the September 1911 competition, 13% had been to elementary schools and not beyond (apart from cramming), 17% to higher elementary schools, and 67% had been, for however short a time, at a secondary school of some type.² Amongst the latter the schools concerned were, in only 5% of the cases, in membership of the Headmasters' Conference; the proportion of the whole 265 who had been at such schools was 3%. Even if we take as our criterion the larger number of schools that has now been admitted to the Conference, these proportions are only increased to 12% and 8% respectively. There are very few cases indeed of Boy Clerks having been at predominantly boarding-schools.

Of those who successfully competed for Second Division Clerkships at the same date, nearly three-fifths were already in the Civil Service, about a quarter of whom had not gone beyond an elementary or higher elementary school. Amongst the direct entrants to the Second Division, however, nearly all had had some kind of secondary education. The proportion of all those recruited who had been at Headmasters' Conference schools was 5%; and there was no material difference in this respect between direct entrants and others. Again hardly any boarding-schools appear in the list.

It is only when we come to the Intermediate Class that certain significant differences are found. Information is available regarding the examinations held for this class during the five years 1906-10. About a quarter of the successful candidates were already in the Service, but neither they nor the direct entrants seem to have ended their education at the elementary or higher elementary stage. Of those who entered the Intermediate Class from the lower ranks of the Civil Service, some 10% had been to Headmasters' Conference schools. Amongst the direct entrants, however, no fewer than 36% had been at schools of this type; and although most of the schools concerned were for day boys, some boarding-schools were represented (e.g. Rugby, Blundell's and Tonbridge). It must be remembered, however, that the Intermediate Class was a small one. Amongst classes common to

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the Service below the Higher Division its members only formed some 10% of the total. Only six or so Departments had made use of it, and in some cases this was in order to economize by eliminating Class 1 posts altogether; where this happened, promotion from the Intermediate Class to the Higher Division was made virtually impossible, as inter-class movement of this type could only take place within a Department.

Something is also known about the occupations of the fathers of the successful candidates at the 1911 competitions, though lack of precision in the description of these occupations means that the figures given here and in Table 3 must be taken as rough estimates only;³ due allowance must be made for this when comparing the percentages with the more detailed 'father's occupation at child's birth' figures for the 1929, 1939 and 1950 higher civil servants. Using the five-category social class grouping employed by the Registrar-General in the 1951 Census, we find that half or more of the fathers of successful competitors in the Boy Clerks' and Second Division Clerks' examinations were to be found in the three lowest social classes, and only 3% or 4% in the highest. The similarity between these two groups is, of course, to be expected; three-fifths of those who succeeded in becoming Second Division Clerks were already in the Service, many of them having been Boy Clerks. An entirely different position is found when we classify the occupations of the fathers of successful candidates for the open competition for Class 1 Clerkships in the Home Civil Service, for the Indian Civil Service, and for Eastern Cadetships. Here 55% of the fathers are found in the highest social class, and only 2% in the three lowest classes combined. In the case of successful candidates in examinations for the 'junior appointments' group of situations (the Intermediate Class, one-sixth of whom were already in the Service), the father's occupation proportions lie somewhere between these two extremes, as can be seen from Table 3. In short, the differences between the Boy Clerks, the Second Division and the Intermediate men are in the direction that the schools information and the educational standard of the respective examinations would lead us to expect. A social gulf existed between the bulk of the civil servants recruited to these classes at that time and the university men who succeeded in the combined examinations for the Home Higher Division, the I.C.S.

TABLE 3

OCCUPATIONS OF FATHERS OF SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES AT COMPETITIONS FOR VARIOUS TYPES OF CIVIL SERVICE POST IN 1911, ARRANGED IN THE REGISTRAR-GENERAL'S SOCIAL CLASSES AS EMPLOYED IN THE 1951 CENSUS

<i>Type of Competition</i>	<i>No Gainful Occupation</i>		<i>Social Class I</i>		<i>Social Class II</i>		<i>Social Class III</i>		<i>Social Classes IV and V</i>		<i>Occupation Unknown</i>		<i>Total</i>
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
(1) For Clerkships (Class 1) in Home Civil Service, Indian Civil Service, and Eastern Cadetships	2	2.0	55	55.0	41	41.0	2	2.0	—	—	—	—	100
(2) 'Junior appointments' group of situations	1	2.5	15	37.5	14	35.0	9	22.5	1	2.5	—	—	40
(3) Second Division Clerks	—	—	4	4.0	47	47.0	24	24.0	25	25.0	—	—	100
(4) Boy Clerks	—	—	9	3.4	102	38.5	115	43.4	37	14.0	2	1.0	265
1951 Census: 1% sample: distribution of all males aged 20-64 in Great Britain	1.5		3.4		15.0		51.7		28.4				

The Registrar-General's Social Classes: I. Professional, etc., occupations. II. Intermediate occupations. III. Skilled occupations. IV and V. Partly-skilled and unskilled occupations.

Note: For an explanation of the use of 1951 figures for comparison with data relating to earlier periods, see p. 148.

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and Eastern Cadetships; the evidence leaves no doubt that the social strata from which the two groups were drawn were entirely different. Only in the case of the Intermediate Class does this statement need slight qualification; here (on both the school and parental occupation evidence) a substantial proportion of the direct entrants came from the same social strata as did their Class 1 competition colleagues.

These, then, were the lower ranks of the Service in the years preceding the outbreak of the 1914-18 war. As a result of the war, makeshift and temporary recruitment arrangements obtained for some time; but by the mid-1920s new and more permanent plans were being put into operation. The new pattern differed from the pre-war one in a number of important respects. First, the employment of temporary Boy Clerks had gone for good (and although the Post Office continued to take on Boy Messengers, it was proudly claimed that an adult post was guaranteed for every one of them⁴). Much of the routine clerical work they used to do was now done by young women Writing Assistants (previously employed only in certain Departments), a 'sweated' class of 5,000 or so for which there was, as in the case of the 4,000 shorthand- and copy-typists, no male recruitment. Good clerical work was now the responsibility of an established General Clerical Class of over 20,000 (a quarter of whom were women), with outside recruitment at 16-17 for applicants not in ex-Service or other special categories; a further 14,000 men and 2,000 women were to be found in Departmental clerical classes. Secondly, the recruitment ages and examination requirements both of these and of the class coming next in the hierarchy had been changed so as to fit in with the national educational system. The new General Executive Class (4,000 or so, less than 40% of whom were women), with normal outside recruitment of its junior members at 18-19, was to be responsible for the detailed work of administration or execution of policy. The intention was that the General Clerical Class should attract those leaving secondary schools at 16-17 and who had reached School Certificate standard, while the Executive Class would take those who had remained at school longer and reached Higher Certificate standard. From a strictly recruitment point of view the new Executive was the successor of the pre-war Intermediate Class rather than of the old Second Division; but in

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practice it was largely staffed in the early years by regraded Second Division men.

A third new development was the provision, within the category of 'other executive' posts, of openings for open competition between the ages of 21 and 24. There had been isolated, and sometimes abortive, experiments of this kind before the war. Now, however, the kind of people who had 'obtained a low honours or good pass degree at a University'⁵ could take the tax inspector group examination leading to posts as Assistant Inspectors of Taxes in the Inland Revenue, Third Class Officers in the Ministry of Labour and (though only for a few years) Junior Assistant Auditors in the Ministry of Health. 'Other executive' posts numbered some 11,000 in all, of which only 5% were held by women.

All these classes of entrant, it will be noticed, still fulfilled the two conditions necessary for being regarded as the lower ranks in a hierarchy of which the Administrative Class (formerly Class 1 or the Higher Division) formed the top. For no technical knowledge was required on entry, and even the tax inspector group examination was not then regarded as of university honours standard. To that extent no confusion need arise in distinguishing promotion from transfer, even when considering the Civil Service origins of higher administrative staff of very varying ages and dates of entry. Uniformity of practice is more difficult to achieve, however, when an attempt is made to distinguish between two broad degrees of promotion, from the bottom rungs of the ladder and from the intermediate ones. In the present study 'promotion from clerical originally' is used to describe the case of anyone whose original entry was into one of the lowest of the Civil Service classes: Boy Clerk or Assistant Clerk in the pre-war, the Clerical Class in the inter-war, and Boy Messenger, Dockyard Apprentice and the like in both periods. 'Promotion from executive' describes those who came into that class initially, as well as old Second Division and Intermediate entrants; it also includes successful inter-war open competitors for 'other executive' posts. Doubtful cases, which inevitably arise in a structure as complicated as the British Civil Service, have been allocated to one or other of the categories on the available evidence; their number is too small to affect the significance of the results.

What evidence exists to show the kind of people found in these

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ranks of the Service in the inter-war period? Lists of schools were drawn up for the Tomlin Commission, from which certain general conclusions can be drawn.⁶ Of the first hundred successful candidates for entry to the clerical classes (general and Departmental) in April 1929, 76 were boys and 24 girls; in the great majority of cases the last school attended had been a secondary one, usually the local County High School. Not more than 1% of the boys' schools concerned were in membership of the Headmasters' Conference. 77 boys and 52 girls succeeded at the October 1928 competition for the Executive Class. Nearly all seem to have had some secondary education, and about 16% of the boys had attended a Headmasters' Conference school; this proportion is raised to a quarter if we include schools which have since been added to the Conference.

For the tax inspector group, school and university information is available for the five-year period 1925-29 for the 209 men and 38 women who succeeded in these competitions for 'other executive' posts. As in the case of the 1928 executive competition, about 16% of the men had been to Headmasters' Conference schools, but again Eton, Harrow, Rugby, Winchester and most predominantly boarding-schools are unrepresented. It can safely be said that, even in these higher reaches of the lower ranks it was, both before the 1914-18 war and after, unusual to find anyone with a boarding-school background. About 18% of the successful male candidates in the tax inspector examinations had not been to a university. Of the university men, only 27% were Oxford or Cambridge; 22% were London, 14% Glasgow, 10% Edinburgh, 7% Wales and 6% Manchester, the remaining 14% having been to Aberdeen, Birmingham, Bristol, Durham, Leeds, Liverpool, Nottingham, Reading, St. Andrews, Southampton, Belfast or Dublin. This is in striking contrast to the educationally stiffer administrative group examinations with a different interviewing board and leading to socially and financially more attractive posts. Here the corresponding proportions for the 81 successful male candidates for Home Administrative Class appointments in the same five years (all of whom had been to a university) were 83% Oxford or Cambridge, 5% London, 5% Edinburgh, 7% Glasgow, Dublin or St. Andrews, with no representation at all of other universities. Even if we add to these the 304 men taking the

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same examination who, after attending a university in the British Isles, secured appointments in the Indian Civil Service or as Eastern Cadets, the Oxford and Cambridge proportion is still as high as 71%, London accounting for 15%, Dublin 5%, Edinburgh 4%, and Glasgow, Manchester, Birmingham, Aberdeen, St. Andrews, Durham, Leicester, Nottingham, and Wales for the remaining 5%.

Neither for this nor for the previous Royal Commission was similar information about unsuccessful candidates made available. The Tomlin Commission was, moreover, less fortunate than its predecessor in that no data were supplied on parental occupation for any class of entrant. Indeed, the only published information on that question between 1911 and the present day seems to be that, at the 1929 administrative group competition, 'among the candidates there was a son of a Tramway Linesman and a son of a Duke'; we are not told which, if either, was successful.

(2) Having given some account of the lower ranks of the Service and the social strata from which they were recruited, the problem of promotion from these ranks to the Higher Division raises a number of issues. What were the rules governing such promotion? What views were held, both in the Service and outside it, regarding these rules? How many people in fact succeeded in surmounting the barrier between the lower and the higher ranks? The answers to each of these questions in the pre-1914 period differ to some extent from those in the post-1918 period.

(a) *Pre-1914*. Before the introduction of open examination as the means of entry into two distinct levels of the Service in 1870, those who occupied the less important posts could, under favourable conditions, rise to the most responsible positions in their Departments. Seniority, merit and influence no doubt had a varying relative importance on different occasions, and there was a hard core of totally incompetent people who were incapable of discharging the duties of any office; but the ladder of promotion reached from the bottom to the top, and though the social origin of those at the two ends of the scale often differed little if at all, it was the proud boast of many of those in senior positions that they had risen from the ranks of the Service. No provision was made, following the 1870 Order in Council, for anyone who had entered by the examination under Regulation 11 to be promoted

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to any post for which entrants under Regulation 1 were eligible. Robert Lowe's views on the matter make it clear that this omission was intentional.⁸ There should be no such promotion; those already in the Service who thought they were fitted for higher duties could take the open examination, but should not be given any age allowance. Education was important because of the status it gave a man in dealing with the world when representing the office; those who lacked this educational status were unfitted for high positions.⁹ As, one by one, the various Departments revised their staffing policy to comply with the new rules, the door of promotion from the assistant establishment to the upper establishment was closed.

The Select Committee of 1873, charged with the duty of finding possible economies in the clerical staffs of the Civil Departments, came to a very different conclusion, though not without much debate. They wanted to maintain competitive examinations as the means of entry to the Service, whilst at the same time having no artificial barriers to promotion by merit. The only way of reconciling these two desirable objectives was 'to arrange the competitive examinations so as to supply each office with young men suitable to the general character of the Department, and to place them all on a footing of equality so far as regards their prospect of rising'.¹⁰ The first part of this recommendation was unacceptable because it appeared to cut across the whole principle of a unified Service, the first battle for which had so recently been fought and won. Unfortunately this made it easy to ignore the second part of the recommendation as well, and it was left to those on the wrong side of the Service barrier periodically to embarrass their superiors by quoting the Childers Committee in support of their claims.

The Playfair recommendations of 1875 reaffirmed the separate recruitment of different classes of civil servant, though in a modified form. Promotion from what was now to be called the Lower to the Higher Division should be a matter of rare occurrence; it should only take place if proposed by the Departmental Head, sanctioned by the Treasury and certified by the Civil Service Commissioners.¹¹ An Order in Council of 1876 carried out this suggestion, but added the requirement of ten years' previous service. As this was interpreted by the Treasury to mean service in the

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Lower Division, and the Lower Division had only been established in 1876, no exceptional promotions of this type could take place until 1886.¹² In the meantime the clerks in that Division were becoming increasingly concerned lest, when 1886 came, so many new examination recruits would have been taken into the Higher Division that there would be no promotion openings there for many years afterwards. In 1883 some 1,500 of them put their names to a memorial setting forth their grievances; this eventually reached the Treasury by way of the Colonial Office, and was replied to in 1884.¹³ The aggrieved clerks pointed out that Northcote and Trevelyan themselves had never intended to erect a barrier of this kind when their reforms were introduced: 'the systematic promotion of meritorious officers from the lower to the higher grades of the Service is the object to which our whole plan is more distinctly directed than any other'. The Treasury, though declining to follow the memorialists down this particular path, restated their attitude on the promotion question in what seemed to be a much more hopeful form. 'Although the number of lower division clerks promoted to the higher division must always bear a small proportion to the number not so promoted, it is not necessary that they should be an insignificant proportion of the upper division. On the contrary, my Lords look forward to that division's being largely replenished, in certain Departments, from the best members of the lower division. It will probably always be necessary to reserve a power of direct appointment to the upper division; but there are many Departments in which this power need not—so far as my Lords can foresee—be exercised habitually, or even frequently. Promotion from the lower to the higher division may therefore fairly be considered as a legitimate aspiration for the superior members of the former.' That was in 1884.¹⁴ Two years later such promotions were temporarily suspended (1886–90) before any could in fact take place, while the Ridley Commission's deliberations were in progress. And although the aggrieved clerks may have looked back on this policy statement with a good deal of cynicism in the years that followed, the pre-1914 figures are, as will be shown later, quite compatible with the honest pursuit of these limited objectives.

The Ridley Commission's recommendations seemed to leave matters where they were, though they suggested waiving the ten

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years prior service condition; it was useful, however, to have on record the views of certain Departmental Heads (e.g. Inland Revenue) that promotion alone would suffice to fill all the higher posts in their own offices. An Order in Council of 1890 reduced the length-of-service requirement from ten years to eight. There was still active discontent amongst the Second Division Clerks about the inter-class barrier, and certain Members of Parliament were pressing for some relaxation of Treasury promotion policy in the mid-1890s;¹⁵ but the formal position was virtually unchanged when the MacDonnell Commission reported in 1914.

Three points of some practical importance should be noted about the rules governing inter-class promotion. First, it was frequently stated by Heads of Departments giving evidence before the MacDonnell Commission that the loss of pay which a Second Division man might sometimes, and a staff clerk would usually, suffer on promotion to the First Division, formed a much more serious obstacle than the mere difficulty of obtaining Treasury sanction to the change in status.¹⁶ This was probably quite often merely a convenient excuse for inaction, and should in any case not have hindered the upward movement of the younger Second Division men (i.e. those who only just fulfilled the eight years prior service condition). Secondly, where the Head of a Department with special characteristics chose to experiment with a large-scale promotion policy the Treasury, true to their 1884 principles, did not object. The outstanding case of this type is the Customs Board's ten-year trial of such a plan between 1900 and 1909, which will be discussed later. Thirdly, it may not always have been made clear to those in the Lower Division that promotion to the Higher Division was officially regarded as only justifiable in exceptional cases. The MacDonnell Commission expressed surprise when the staff and Second Division Clerks at the Admiralty spoke of 'the definite expectation of promotion to the higher division which is one of the principal inducements to men taking the second division examination'. One witness suggested by way of explanation that the crammers who trained youths for this examination probably told them that the First Division was open to the clever Second Division man.¹⁷

Despite misunderstandings, then, the formal position had changed very little during the years before the 1914-18 war;

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though some Departments were entitled to make more use of the practice than others, movement across the class barrier was only to take place where exceptional ability could be shown to justify it. What were the arguments, both inside the Service and outside it, for and against the maintenance of such a barrier?

There was, to begin with, the view that such a cleavage followed social class lines, and meant the division of every office into what were virtually social castes. This, if true, was likely to have many undesirable results, including failure to establish a friendly and co-operative spirit in doing the work, and lack of sympathy and understanding on the part of those in authority in dealing with working-class problems. Was it true? The evidence of schools attended and parental occupations clearly shows that it was. The Intermediate Class formed an exception, but the importance of this special case is weakened when we remember that this class was introduced to replace Higher Division men in sections of offices where the work and prospects were particularly discouraging. The senior positions in such sections were merely to be filled by public school boys who for one reason or another had not gone on to a university; they would be both cheaper to employ and more modest in their ambitions than their more fortunate brothers.¹⁸

The social cleavage within the Service was both obvious and, with recruitment to the Higher Division largely restricted to the privileged few with an Oxford or Cambridge education, inevitable. Even in 1871, T. H. Farrer had pointed out the scheme's aristocratic, or rather plutocratic, character. 'It selects men by a competitive examination, demanding an expensive education in high subjects in early years, which only the rich can afford. It offers no opportunity to those who cannot afford this early education, of afterwards making good their way.'¹⁹ As time went on, however, senior civil servants, when questioned on this topic, increasingly often claimed to be unaware of any such cleavage. Thus when the MacDonnell Commission asked the First Civil Service Commissioner whether in his experience those who competed for the various examinations belonged socially to the same circle or not, whether brothers might be found seeking entry to different Divisions, he had nothing useful to say.²⁰ Spokesmen of the Second Division Clerks, however, were in no doubt about the matter. One of them described the Board of Education as divided

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into two camps in regard to their intercourse and status; where oral communication took place it was not between people who really dealt in a frank and friendly manner with each other. However responsible your work might be, you were a member of an inferior class. A Junior Examiner in his twenties could, and sometimes did, send for the head of the accounts section (the clerk in charge of the accounts) to come to his room.²¹ An instance was quoted of a Class 1 examination entrant to another Department who had not been to Oxford or Cambridge.²² 'That man is positively cold shouldered and he feels, I know, that he has no prospect of getting on because he is not in a particular set in the Department.'

No Departmental Head would, by 1912, admit that such a cleavage existed; and no politician would by that time openly have advocated the introduction or maintenance of a rigid social class barrier within the Civil Service. The climate of opinion had so altered in forty years that the honesty of an earlier Chancellor of the Exchequer might well have meant political suicide. 'As far as communication with the world goes, of which some offices have a great deal, I think it is of great consequence that you should have men whose associations and ideas belong to the class with whom they will have to deal.'²³ A promotee, with all his qualifications and merits, '. . . might be found wanting in the very things to which I attach great value in the upper class; perhaps he might not pronounce his h's, or commit some similar solecism, which might be a most serious damage to a department in a case of negotiation.'²⁴ Privately one might agree that this 1873 statement was merely common sense, but in 1912 it was better not to state such truths in public. A cautious inter-class promotion policy would ensure that the wrong people did not enter from below; the nature of the educational ladder would prevent their entry by open competition. Public discussion of the matter was therefore as unnecessary as it was undesirable.

Supporters of the *status quo* felt much less embarrassment in treating the barrier as a purely educational one. The work of the Higher Division required qualities of mind the possession of which could only be tested by an examination of university honours standard; or, better still, the development of these qualities necessitated the intellectual discipline and training that only a residential

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college of one of the older universities could provide. It was impossible to prove or disprove such statements, but by constant reiteration they came almost to be accepted as self-evident. Those on the wrong side of the Civil Service fence might argue that the work of a normal office did not divide itself into rigid categories, that many Lower Division men were actually shouldering responsibilities much greater than those of the junior Class 1 entrants. There was no difficulty in countering such arguments. Your university man had to have some training in the work of the office. And promotion from the one class to the other was not simply a matter of the work done at the margin; there was no point in promoting anyone who did not possess the ability needed to reach the very top. Let those who wanted to rise to the Higher Division show, by competing in the open examination, that they possessed the required intellectual qualities; they had been allowed, for some time past, to subtract five years from their age to enable them to do so. If practically none of them succeeded in entering by this route, it merely proved that the deficiencies in their earlier education could not easily be overcome, and fully justified a policy of restricting promotion within very narrow limits. The possibility that the syllabus might penalize those whose educational progress had not been from preparatory to public school and thence to Oxford or Cambridge was strenuously denied by successive Civil Service Commissioners. Nor would other proofs of educational prowess suffice. You might study for the Bar Finals, or take a London degree after attending evening lectures, but this would hardly alter the Department's views of your capabilities in any way. For educational and social factors shaded imperceptibly into each other. The freemasonry which existed between people who had had a certain grade of education did not necessarily extend to those who studied in their spare time and under inappropriate auspices.

Were there none in the lower ranks of the Service whose experience of Departmental business and whose natural aptitudes would justify their promotion to the Higher Division? Professor Cannan thought there were, so much so that it made him doubt whether the present chasm between the two Divisions was expedient. 'I have been rather struck myself with the ability of the second division civil servants. I dare say, as an average, their

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ability is not very high, but the ability of the people who come to us, who are, of course, a picked lot, is very considerable.'²⁵ Some Heads of Departments with experience of promotion agreed with him. In the Office of Works 'when I saw a man of conspicuous ability in the lower ranks my one object was to put him up . . . and that has been abundantly justified in every case'.²⁶ Promotion in such cases had three objects—the advantage to the public service: the recognition of a man's special personal ability: the stimulus which his promotion would give to the Second Division as a whole to perform better work.²⁷ Others were not so enthusiastic. 'The Admiralty have not found among the men so promoted quite the same capacity . . . to respond to all conditions and to the higher responsibilities that devolve upon them later. . . .'²⁸ But the biggest test of all had been the ten-year experiment in the Board of Customs of recruiting to higher posts (other than the Crown appointments) entirely from outside customs staff or Second Division men, thereby reverting to earlier practice. This experiment was pronounced a failure by Sir Laurence Guillemard (himself a Class 1 examination man) who brought it to an end when he became Chairman in 1909. Of about 50 men who had been selected from time to time to serve in the Secretariat, some 30 went out again on the ground of unsuitability or for personal reasons.²⁹ The MacDonnell Commission were much impressed by this apparent failure, the moral of which seemed to be that inter-class promotion should be reserved for exceptional cases.³⁰ It seems equally possible that the explanation lay partly in the double upheaval of upgrading and transfer to headquarters; Inland Revenue, though promoting on a slightly less ambitious scale, had apparently no complaints.³¹ Opinion was divided, but at least in those Departments where experience of the work was more important than negotiating ability, there seems to have been a disposition to allow some men to surmount the barrier from time to time. Where few such promotions took place there were, of course, other rewards in the form of staff clerkships, to which the best of the Second Division men could aspire.

On one point there was universal agreement. The character of the work in the inferior grades was, as the Playfair Commission observed, rarely calculated to develop superior capacities. A

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lengthy service in the Second Division on routine work, far from brightening a man's wits and intellect, was likely to stunt the growth of his abilities.³² It was therefore important, if there was to be promotion, to bring it about before the deadening influence of mechanical activity had gone too far. It was also important to be able to test the potentialities of selected men in the Lower Division by letting them undertake more responsible and exacting tasks. But it was all too easy to pay lip service to such ideas. Unless they were acted upon, the situation described in Sir Louis Mallet's account of the Audit Branch of the India Office in 1874 could arise. The Class 1 entrants 'find themselves in an office with much mechanical work, and they find a set of men capable of doing it under their orders . . . in ten years the real backbone of the office will be found, not in the first class but in the second, and you will have a class of men in the first class not doing very much work, but looking down upon the working bees, and being paid more than they are worth.'³³

The rules governing promotion from the Lower to the Higher Division in the period before 1914 have now been considered, as well as the arguments advanced for and against these arrangements. To complete the picture, some account must be given of the actual numbers of people who succeeded in surmounting the barrier.

There are three ways in which the figures of promotion can be expressed. First, the number of promotions each year can be given as a proportion of the whole annual *intake* (promotions, competition appointments, nominations, etc.) into the Higher Division. Secondly, the number of promotions each year can be expressed as a proportion of those of Second Division or equivalent rank at that time; such a percentage is a rough measure of the *prospect* of promotion to the Higher Division, viewed from below. Thirdly, we can take all those in Higher Division or other senior administrative posts at a particular date, and show the proportion who had reached that position by the *avenue* of promotion. Each of these can be considered in turn.

For twenty years after the 1870 Order in Council it can safely be assumed that practically no promotions of the type in which we are interested took place. As already explained, even when provision was made for exceptional promotion in 1876, the new

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arrangements did not come into effective operation, for one reason and another, until 1890. Only from then onwards, therefore, can data be given. Our main source is a tabular statement supplied for the MacDonnell Commission's use;³⁴ other figures exist, but they are limited in their usefulness.³⁵ During the twenty-two years 1890-1911, 73 promotions are shown as having taken place from the Lower to the Higher Division; to these should be added a further 10 India Office cases which are mentioned in a footnote, making an average of less than 4 promotions a year. For completeness we ought also to include the corresponding promotions of Supplementary Clerks in the Post Office Secretariat; as these are only available for the later part of the period, it is probably best to base our annual proportion of intake on the ten years 1902-11. During those ten years promotions averaged five annually, and competition appointments over 25 a year. If we confine our attention to these two types of appointment (as, in the absence of nomination figures, we have to do), the annual promotion intake proportion is 16%. The average for the preceding ten years, without Post Office promotions, was over 15%; it can safely be assumed, therefore, that the promotion intake proportion for the twenty-year period 1892-1911 was not less than 16%. The majority report of the MacDonnell Commission comments favourably on the ratio (it 'cannot in our opinion be regarded as inconsiderable'³⁶) which was higher than the complaints of the Second Division Clerks would have led one to expect. There are, moreover, strong reasons for supposing that our figures seriously understate the true extent of inter-class promotion. We have already seen that, in the Customs Office experiment, twenty men were upgraded without being subsequently down-graded again, yet none of these is included in the tabular statement, presumably because of technicalities arising from the nomenclature of their earlier or later posts.

Differences between Departments were, of course, very considerable. It was to be expected that in 'offices of detail', such as Inland Revenue, where the best mode of obtaining thoroughly competent clerks for the higher posts was said to be to train them from the beginning, the promotion intake percentage would be much higher than elsewhere. Yet the existing disparities (the Admiralty had 19 promotions in the twenty-year period, the

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Treasury and the Colonial Office none) were generally felt to be too great. A Second Division Clerk in the Board of Education³⁷ gave it as his opinion that the intake proportion ought to be 50% or even on occasion (pressed by Philip Snowden) 100%.³⁸ In the main, however, all concerned were reluctant to indicate, even in broad terms, what they thought the ideal proportion would be. Considered from the point of view of the Second Division man's hope of rising to the First Division the existing figures were, of course, highly discouraging; the annual promotion prospect proportion in the ten-year period 1902-11 was about 0.12%. It was, both theoretically and practically, a highly exceptional contingency, though possibilities were somewhat greater in certain Departments than in others, and it was constantly stressed by those in authority that the legitimate goal of ambition was not a Higher Division post but a staff clerkship.

When we turn from the annual number of promotions, expressed in either of these forms, to an attempt to estimate our third proportion, the percentage of those holding Higher Division or other senior administrative posts at a given date who had been promoted from the ranks, the paucity of statistics becomes very marked. This does not arise from any lack of interest in this problem on the part of the MacDonnell or earlier Commissions, but rather from the circumstance that lack of comparability of data apparently defeated their efforts to prepare estimates. The MacDonnell Commission, for example, called for returns from each Head of Department in standard form showing the mode of entry to the Service of all their officers; but in the ensuing arguments about the correct allocation of many of the individuals concerned, the preparation of a consolidated statement seems to have been abandoned. All that can be done, therefore, is laboriously to piece together the scraps of information contained in the oral evidence. Surprisingly enough, a statistical picture of the 1911 position can be built up in this roundabout way which does not contain too many or too large gaps.

If we take eleven of the main Departments of State (Treasury, War, Admiralty, Trade, Home, Post, Works, Customs and Excise, Inland Revenue, Local Government and the Colonial Office), they seem to have included between them some 435 Higher Division or other senior administrative staff, and of these 87, or

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20%, had been promoted, the bulk of the remainder (though not always of the highest ranks) having been recruited through the Class 1 examination. These 435 men correspond to the Administrative Class of the present day; and if we suppose that the administrative personnel of the remaining Departments was not very large and did not differ materially in its origin from this, then 20% can be taken as a rough promotion avenue proportion for the Service as a whole at this date. There were, it is true, 95 similar people in the Board of Education, only one of whom was a promoted man; their inclusion would reduce the promotion avenue proportion to 17%. Most of these 95, however, were counted, quite wrongly from our point of view, as specialists; the MacDonnell figure of Higher Division personnel for the *whole* Service is only 495 plus about 33 more senior posts.³⁹

Though a figure of roughly 20% correctly measures the numerical importance of promoted men in administrative posts beyond the class barrier, it exaggerates their importance in two ways. First, they were rarely found at the very top of the ladder; this was partly, but not wholly, due to the fact that young entrants to the lower ranks in the twenty years after 1870 had in practice been debarred from crossing the barrier, so that even by 1911 there were few promotees with long enough administrative experience for high office. Secondly, in many of the key Departments promotion from the ranks to the Higher Division had hardly taken place at all. Thus there were no promoted men to provide a leaven for the Class 1 staff of the War Office or the Colonial Office, and hardly any in the Treasury, the Home Office or the equivalent staff of the Board of Education. As the earlier discussion would lead one to expect, there was a heavy concentration of them in Customs and Excise (59% of higher staff), the Admiralty (about 50%), Inland Revenue (41%) and Works (33%), and smaller but significant proportions in the Post Office (19%), Local Government Board (13%) and Board of Trade (9%). Beyond the limits of these twelve Departments the individual proportions of promotees would no doubt also show wide variations if the data were available. It is known that, of the six most senior administrators in the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, one had been in the ranks and two had been transferred from specialist posts, while the products of the Class 1 examination

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were not regarded as suitable for directing positions.⁴⁰ Certain other Offices had been organized on a basis where Intermediate men replaced the Higher Division altogether. The National Debt Office relied for all its senior staff on promotees; this was an extreme case of an 'office of detail' where it was claimed that, to be of any use, a man must virtually have started at the bottom of the ladder and mastered the complexities of the work.⁴¹

(b) *Post-1918*. The broad changes in the classes comprising the lower ranks of the Service brought about by the post-1918 reorganization have already been discussed. We now have to consider in what ways the formal position in the matter of inter-class promotion was modified in the inter-war period; what views were held about the question; and how the figures differ from the pre-war ones. The majority report of the MacDonnell Commission, as we have seen, showed moderate satisfaction with the working of the arrangements for exceptional promotion. Despite the uneven distribution of such opportunities as between Departments, despite the possible need for some revision of Treasury practice in the matter of salary adjustment, the principle of reserving inter-class promotion for exceptional cases was clearly right.⁴² The Commonwealth of Australia might be able to do without a Class 1 examination, and might rely wholly on promotion from the ranks;⁴³ but in this country it was better to follow Viscount Haldane's advice in his 1913 address to Bristol University.⁴⁴ 'The State will suffer badly if the intellectual level of its civil servants is lowered; and it will be lowered if the qualifications for all positions are lowered to the educational equipment of a youth who has ceased his studies at eighteen. The true remedy is to break down the class barrier by making provision for enabling the youth of eighteen to go on, if he is fit to do so, and qualify himself more highly.' Comforted by these assurances, there was no need to modify existing promotion procedure except in matters of detail. The eight-year prior service requirement should be reduced to six;⁴⁵ and a new section should be created in the Treasury to secure, *inter alia*, efficient Departmental machinery for recognizing and rewarding exceptional cases of ability by promotion either inside or outside the Department.⁴⁶

In common with the other MacDonnell recommendations, these had to await reconsideration after the war. When this hap-

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pened, it was to be expected that a Reorganization Committee of the Civil Service National Whitley Council would at least partially reflect the wish of the lower ranks to have obstacles to advancement done away with. 'We feel strongly that artificial barriers to promotion, where they now exist, should be removed.' Speaking of the renamed Administrative Class, 'our view is that the class should be open to all men and women already employed in the Service who show early proof of real ability and promise of being able to discharge, in course of time, higher administrative functions'.⁴⁷ A Central Authority should be established to investigate and decide on the qualifications of candidates recommended by the Heads of their Departments (who would be expected to submit names, from time to time). And there was also to be provision for the promotion of older men to the higher grades of the Administrative Class.⁴⁸ In the general reorganization scramble that followed, however, more attention was concentrated on fitting the personnel of the old divisions and grades into the new classes and ranks; on the claims of temporaries and of ex-Servicemen; and on the new arrangements for promotion within a class, comprising annual reports and promotion boards.

Opportunities of permanently crossing the barrier by making use of wartime or temporary reconstruction arrangements proved to be surprisingly limited. Thus although the reconstruction competitions for entry to Higher Division posts dispensed with an examination of university honours standard, they were intended to recruit men of exactly the type who would, but for the war, have taken the normal open competition. Quite apart from the age-limits, the policy of the interviewing boards ensured that hardly anyone without a Commission in the Armed Forces and some period of university study was successful. This did not exclude a small number of suitably qualified men who had been temporarily employed as civil servants (usually for a month or two); but the lower ranks of the Service could not readily cross the barrier by this route. A different special competition was held in order to carry out a recommendation of the Lytton Committee. They had suggested in June 1921 that half the Administrative Class vacancies occurring during the next three years should be filled from ex-Service candidates then temporarily employed who would have been too old for the earlier competitions.⁴⁹ Only

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eight men reached the required standard; it was September 1924 before all of them had been given posts.

Once the reconstruction period was over, the pre-war arrangements regarding promotion from the ranks of the Service into the Administrative Class came into operation again, though with certain significant modifications. First, no more was heard of the condition that inter-class promotion could only take place after a minimum number of years had been spent in the Service; this was a belated recognition that the Ridley Commission's recommendation had been sound, that it was folly to make the best kind of promotion (i.e. at an early age) the most difficult. Secondly, inter-class promotion in what one may call a straight line was, in theory at least, to be regarded as a normal, and no longer an exceptional, occurrence. Thus by *Gazette* notification dated 7th August 1922, it was laid down, *inter alia*, that promotions from the Clerical to the Executive Class, and from the Executive to the Administrative Class, would be deemed to be 'in normal course' and would not require re-certification by the Civil Service Commissioners. Though this modification in procedure appeared to involve a change in the official attitude towards such promotions, this was not the impression conveyed by the Controller of the Establishments Department at the Treasury in his evidence before the Tomlin Commission. There had, he said, been no change of principle in the matter of inter-class promotion since 1914.⁵⁰ He still described it as 'the process of exceptional promotion', and gave no hint that such movement was intended to take place in normal course. Reassured on this point, the Tomlin Commission, while generally satisfied with things as they were, thought that some small improvement might be effected in the promotion opportunities of those unlucky enough to be serving in Departments where there was no Administrative Class. They suggested an informal Service Committee to facilitate the transfer of suitable candidates to other Departments, and their trial on Administrative Class duties. Alarmed lest this mild proposal might open the flood-gates, they added this warning. 'It would be the duty of this Committee to bear in mind the desirability of maintaining a steady flow into the Administrative Class of recruits from the open competition.'⁵¹ A committee of the proposed type belatedly came into operation in 1935.

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What views were held, both inside and outside the Service, on these inter-war promotion arrangements? Some observers spoke as though a new era had begun. 'Since the war a happy policy of promotion from the subordinate classes of the Service into the Administrative Class has been pursued.'⁵² Others were less sure that adequate opportunities existed. Professor Laski, in 1931, echoed Professor Cannan's remarks of twenty years earlier. 'I have myself taught able young officials of this kind; and neither their attainment of a brilliant degree in subjects relevant to their departmental work, nor even their publication of researches of importance in that field, has led to their being given special opportunity to be seconded for better work.'⁵³ An experienced senior official, Sir Albert Flynn,⁵⁴ made it clear that there had been no great improvement.⁵⁵ Those who enter in the lower classes must be given every opportunity of showing their fitness for a higher class; when they show it, they should be preferred to fresh candidates from outside. 'I say emphatically and with a full sense of responsibility that, in my experience, these conditions, though admitted in theory, are most insufficiently observed in practice. The different classes of the Civil Service are treated as "castes", determined by a man's entrance examination, and special promotion into the upper caste is very rare.' The upper caste had perhaps retired further up the hills, but it still did not admit the caste of the plains.

To hear someone other than a Second Division Clerk speak in such terms was itself an improvement. It was not to be expected, of course, that Departmental Heads would admit the existence of a class barrier when giving evidence before the Tomlin Commission. It was a step forward, however, when one of them admitted the principle that suitable candidates from the lower ranks should, in the filling of junior administrative posts, have preference over open competition entrants. Sir John Anderson claimed to be applying this principle in the Home Office.⁵⁶ 'If we have a vacancy for an Assistant Principal, the first thing we do is to look around among the people already in the Department of lower rank. It is only if we have got nobody on the spot who seems at the moment to be ripe for promotion of that sort that we go to the Civil Service Commissioners and ask them to assign someone from the examination. It is important that the

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administrative staff should contain both types—both the University man whose education has been carried to a higher point, and the promoted man. I do not think we have had quite enough experience yet to enable us to say what the right proportions are of the two types.' In the Home Office the promotion avenue proportion among administrators of the rank of Assistant Secretary and below seems to have been about 13%, i.e. below the pre-war average for the Service, but very much above that Department's own earlier figure.

How many other Departmental Heads agreed with this principle of first looking for a suitable promotee; and, of them, how many applied it in practice? We cannot answer either of these questions, but two points about the Tomlin Commission evidence are perhaps significant. First, no other Head claimed to be a supporter of the principle, which was never mentioned again; nor did the Treasury representatives say that they agreed with Sir John Anderson's view. Secondly, those whose administrative staffs contained a substantial proportion of promoted men talked about the figures; others remained silent on the matter. Taken together, these circumstances suggest that the principle was not by any means accepted throughout the Service; and that, on a public occasion, it was inexpedient to draw attention to a low percentage of promotees, in view of the embarrassing issues that such an admission would inevitably raise. Fortunately for the success of this policy of silence, the Tomlin Commission did not include a Graham Wallas or a Philip Snowden.

Instead of discussing the principles on which inter-class promotion should be based, or the extent to which it should, or did, take place, attention was confined to vague generalities about the respective qualities of past promotees and examination entrants. Sir Francis Floud (Customs and Excise, one of the two Departmental Heads who had risen from the ranks⁵⁷) sought to show that no difference existed. 'I should be very sorry to have to make any distinction between the value of Principals according to their origin. I do not believe you could find any difference.'⁵⁸ Sir Ernest Gowers obviously disagreed with this view, but was vague about the nature of the distinction. 'I think you get something from that method of recruitment (open competition) which you cannot rely upon getting by promotion.'⁵⁹ Others thought

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that direct entrants from outside had qualities making them more mobile, or more likely to rise to the very top. The promotee's handicap in the first respect was stressed by Sir John Anderson. 'It very often happens that you can find a man who is admirably suited to administrative work within a limited sphere, and one may be glad to take the opportunity to promote an officer of clerical rank to such a post. But one must not attempt to carry too many posts of that kind in the Department. If you do, you lose elasticity.'⁶⁰ The second disadvantage was partly another aspect of the first. Sir Arthur Robinson (himself an examination entrant with very high marks) linked them together. 'Men promoted to the Administrative Class do well; but . . . from the point of view of rising to the top, the examination candidates are better.' Those coming in through the Class I examination were more adaptable.⁶¹ More recently, disappointment has been expressed at finding promoted men imbued with even more caution than their examination counterparts. They have personal charm, we are told, but are shy of any step at all away from the recognized paths.⁶² Sir Albert Flynn⁶³ thought that 50% or more of the administrative personnel could be satisfactorily chosen from the ranks, but admitted that, if you diluted the class by more than half, there might be a risk of finding too few men equal to the topmost posts. It must not be forgotten, however, that a 'considerable' proportion of men entering by the upper door proved unfit for administrative work, and enough suitable men could readily be found to replace them if the problem were tackled systematically. 'The selected lower-grade man is as good as the best of the First Division in force of character, power of command and width of outlook; and he generally knows the office and its real business better than the higher-class man', who had often had only the one-sided training of private-secretarying.⁶⁴

It can be seen that the opinions of senior officials and others on these questions of quality as related to Service origin were varied, and not altogether helpful as a guide to policy. What had the representatives of the lower ranks themselves to say about it all? Internecine quarrels on issues of more practical concern to the bulk of their members unfortunately occupied most of their attention. Thus the Civil Service Clerical Association's principal grievance was the blocking of higher clerical and executive posts by

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redundant Second Division men; and their main proposal was to do away with an Executive Class with separate outside recruitment. The Society of Civil Servants (representing the executive, directing and analogous grades) naturally devoted a good deal of attention to the rebuttal of these dangerous arguments, but also had something to say about promotion to the Administrative Class. In general, liberal opportunities of appointment to posts in the cadet and higher administrative grades should be available to officers of other classes.⁶⁵ More specifically, they asked for central pooling arrangements to ensure that the whole field of potential administrative ability in the Service was surveyed; tentative fixing of the proportion of Assistant Principal vacancies to be observed over, say, three years (though they 'recognized that the number of such promotions can never be very large', and seemed broadly satisfied with recent figures); and more promotion of older men straight to higher administrative ranks.⁶⁶ In all of this there was none of the outspoken comment on social barriers, gulfs and chasms that had caused such embarrassment to earlier Commissions. An outside observer, particularly if he relied on the inadequate published social data relating to the Civil Service, might have been led to suppose that little remained to be done in attaining Arthur Boutwood's ideal, stated in his reservation to the Majority Report of the MacDonnell Commission.⁶⁷ 'The interests of the public service prohibit any artificial limitation of the field from which administrative officers are selected.'

A general picture has already been given of the social strata from which new entrants to the lower ranks were being recruited in the 1920s. Some indication must now be provided of the extent of promotion in this inter-war period. Unfortunately the available inter-war figures are both less numerous and less helpful than the pre-war ones. It is difficult to compare them with the pre-war figures already discussed which, because they were confined to Second Division and equivalent cases, gave a reliable indication of the importance of promotion from the ranks.

The Tomlin Commission were officially informed by a Treasury representative that in the eight years 1921-8 there had been 47 promotions to the Administrative Class, and 84 people had entered by competition. Of the 47, the Society of Civil Servants

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(representing the executive, directing and analogous grades), after very careful enquiry, were only able to trace 36; the remainder were presumably transferees. Of the 84, 11 probably came in by the limited competitions already described, but as they were not promotees in our sense, we can legitimately include them with the open competition entrants for the present comparison. There would seem, therefore, to have been 36 true cases of promotion from the ranks in this eight-year period. This average of between four and five a year is very much the same as that for the ten years before the war. Expressed as a proportion of the whole promotion and competition intake it is, however, nearly twice as large—30% compared with 16%. This (taken together with the abnormally high figures for individual years, e.g. 1928) may have formed one basis for the belief that, after the war, promotions took place on a much more liberal scale. When it is remembered, however, that the period 1921–8 included three years in which open competitions did not take place, and was immediately preceded by reconstruction competitions admitting about two hundred new people to the Administrative Class, the apparent generosity of the policy of promotion from the ranks begins to look somewhat niggardly.

Unfortunately all evidence of the actual number of promotions from the ranks in the ten years following 1928 is lacking. For though the *Annual Reports* of the Civil Service Commissioners always included figures of promotions to the Administrative Class from other classes, a note gave the warning that these figures were confined to promotions in which re-certification was deemed necessary. As we have seen, 'straight-line' promotions from the Executive Class to the Administrative Class had, since the *Gazette* announcement of 7th August 1922, not needed the sanction of the Commissioners. All 'true' promotions in our sense are therefore apparently missing from these published data; the figures can only be used as an indication of the annual extent of transfer to the Administrative Class from professional, scientific and technical branches of the Service and from the inspectorate. We have, from 1928–38, no direct evidence on which to estimate what change had taken place since pre-war days either in the promotion intake proportion or in the annual prospect of promotion viewed from below.

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Fortunately a combination of information to be gleaned from the published papers of the Tomlin Commission, and unpublished data relating to 1929 and 1939 assembled for the purpose of the present study, enables a good deal to be said regarding the promotion *avenue* proportion. Taking the Tomlin Commission material first, post-war promotion policy does not sound much more liberal than pre-war, in the light of statements such as these. 'Particulars were furnished showing that about one-quarter of the officers now serving in the Administrative Class had been promoted to that class from other classes.'⁶⁸ These 'other classes' comprised, besides some 15,000 in the executive and 39,000 in the clerical groups of the Service, a further 6,500 in the professional, scientific and technical branches, and had between them contributed perhaps 270 officers to the Administrative Class. This one-quarter, which undoubtedly included some transferees, compares with a pre-war figure of 20% from Second Division and equivalent ranks alone. One recent writer comments on the sentence from the 1931 *Tomlin Report* in these words. 'That does not seem to be an unreasonable proportion, and suggests less rigidity than is sometimes supposed.'⁶⁹ There would, nevertheless, appear to be some degree of rigidity in a system maintaining its promotion *avenue* proportion virtually unchanged (20% compared with something very much less than 25%) during a period of twenty years or so that included the social upheaval of a World War.

We are not told what variations from one Department to another are concealed by the 25%, but once again a laborious sifting of the printed evidence produces some clues. In Customs and Excise, whose destinies were now controlled by a promotee instead of a Class 1 examination man, there seems to have been a partial reversion to the policy of filling the higher ranks from below; half the Principals had apparently been chosen in this way. In the Board of Trade, 52% of those holding the two junior administrative ranks were promotees, as were half of those in its offshoot the Ministry of Labour of the rank of Principal and above; this relatively new Department had a promoted man at its head. In Inland Revenue the promotion *avenue* proportion for all those in the Administrative Class was a third. As on the earlier occasion, the representative of Agriculture and Fisheries

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reported that the administrative ranks had up till now been almost entirely filled by promotion, not always of clerical but sometimes of professional and technical officers. For only one of the many Departments where the promotion avenue proportion must have been much *less* than a quarter have we any printed evidence at all. In the Home Office the figure for those of the rank of Assistant Secretary and below was 13%. Except in this last case, the pattern is very much what a study of the pre-war material would lead one to expect.

Fortunately 1929 is a date for which it becomes possible to use some of the unpublished data assembled and analysed specifically for the present enquiry. Of the 43 top administrative posts only four (say 9%) were held by 'true' promotees, of whom one had come right from the bottom of the ladder. The proportion is somewhat higher—14%—in the case of Principal Assistant Secretaries. Altogether, out of the 121 most senior administrative appointments in the Service, only 15 were filled by rankers. Amongst Assistant Secretaries, a fifth had been promoted from the ranks. Of the Higher Civil Service as a whole at that date, about 17% were promotees, and a further 9% had been transferred from Civil Service professional, scientific or technical posts. This makes it virtually certain that our earlier supposition—to the effect that the Tomlin Commission's 'one-quarter of . . . the Administrative Class' included a substantial proportion of transferees—was correct.

Some interesting differences emerge when these cases of true promotion from the ranks are analysed by Department. In only five Departments of any size had promotees reached the most senior administrative positions (i.e. above the rank of Assistant Secretary). These were Customs and Excise, with three-quarters of such staff promoted from the ranks, the Ministry of Labour and the Post Office (a third in each case), Agriculture and Fisheries (a quarter), and the Board of Trade (22%). No other major Department had any promotees at all in these senior posts.

An analysis of the method of entry to the Administrative Class of the higher civil servants in our 1939 group throws further light on the extent to which promotion policy in the inter-war period lived up to the high hopes of the Reorganization Committee in 1920. In the Higher Civil Service as a whole, promotees then

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formed 20·5% of the total instead of 16·9% in 1929. As on the earlier occasion, the promotion avenue proportion was lowest for the highest-ranking administrators, and highest for the lowest rank included (that of Assistant Secretary). The Departmental distribution of the promotees was a little less uneven than it had been in 1929, though the same Departments as before (Customs and Excise, Agriculture and Fisheries, Trade, Labour and the Post Office) proved to be the only major ones in which substantial numbers of them succeeded in reaching the most senior administrative posts. There were isolated cases, however, in the Admiralty, the Air Ministry, the Home Office and the Treasury. There were none in Education or in any of the Departments dealing with Dominion and Colonial affairs.

Though the figures as a whole certainly suggest an increased tendency to promote from the ranks, they do not support the view that this tendency was yet strong enough to have produced any marked change in the social structure of the Higher Civil Service. The relatively small differences between the position in 1939 and 1929, and between 1929 and 1912, would seem to suggest that Departmental Heads and the Treasury were continuing to take a very restricted view of the possibility of those in the lower ranks successfully discharging higher administrative functions, and this despite the fact that the standard of formal education at least of new entrants to these lower classes of the Service had risen considerably over the period. It is fairly clear that the reserves of latent administrative ability were still not being adequately tapped. Either the machinery or the whole basis of selection, or both, clearly needed drastic overhaul if the Administrative Class was not indefinitely to be starved of such talent.

In the event it was war and preparation for war that brought about the change in the Service attitude towards promotion from the ranks. Despite the use of such terms as 'in normal course' to describe promotion from the Executive to the Administrative Class, the figures of those who had reached the Higher Civil Service in that way by 1929 and 1939 make it clear that, for the vast majority of those below, the prospect of surmounting the inter-class barrier was very remote; it remained a theoretical rather than a practical possibility. The 1939-45 war and the events leading up to it led to several important developments.

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First, there was an immediate and enormous increase in the amount of work to be done by the Civil Service, necessitating the expansion of many existing Departments and the creation of new ones. Secondly, open competitions for entry to the Service were suspended, and many civil servants went into the Forces. To meet this situation the broad choice lay between bringing in temporary civil servants with no administrative experience at all, or whose experience had been gained in other spheres, and upgrading established civil servants who knew Service procedure, but had not previously been regarded as sufficiently talented to justify their promotion to the Administrative Class.

We have three means of measuring the extent to which this upgrading took place. First, the Treasury supplied the information that there were 565 promotions of established personnel of other classes to the Administrative Class during the nine-year period 1938-46. Unless we go back to the Treasury figures for the eight years 1921-8, when there were 47 similar cases, no direct comparison with these new figures is possible. As we have seen, however, there is ample indirect evidence to suggest that no great modification in promotion practice took place between 1929 and 1939, and we can safely assume that an annual average of 63 promotions and transfers into the Administrative Class represented a revolutionary change. All wartime promotions and transfers were, of course, on an acting or temporary basis; but established civil servants of other classes who had once secured a foothold in the Administrative Class did not often revert to their earlier status. Since 1946, promotions and transfers have naturally been on a smaller scale than they were during the war; the Treasury have supplied a figure of 111 such cases between 1st January 1947 and 31st March 1949, though as most of these will have taken place before the inauguration of new Normal Limited Competitions in July 1948 (explained below), the annual average is probably not very far short of the 1938-46 level. Comparison of this promotion-and-transfer intake with the open competition intake would be misleading because of the suspension of these competitions during the war. As a guide to the effect of war, preparation for war and its aftermath on numbers entering by different routes, however, it is perhaps worth putting the figure of 676 promotions and transfers (565 plus 111) during the period

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1st January 1938 to 31st March 1949, alongside a figure of about 630 normal and reconstruction open competition entrants not previously in the Service who came in during the same period.⁷⁰ If we add to the first figure those mentioned in the next paragraph, whose promotion took place by way of limited or open competitions, the ratio of promotion-and-transfer entry to 'outsider' competition entry over the period of eleven years or so was roughly 4 to 3. Short of another major war, this golden age for promotion is unlikely ever to appear again. As explained below, an agreed ratio has now been fixed for the filling of *junior* vacancies, but the ratio of open competition entrants to promotees and transferees at all levels has been about fifty-fifty in recent years.

Secondly, the reconstruction arrangements for Civil Service recruitment after the recent war gave very much more scope for established personnel of other classes to enter the Administrative Class than had been the case after the 1914-18 war. Special reconstruction competitions limited to established personnel were held, and as a result 128 such people entered the Administrative Class in the four years 1945-6 to 1948-9.⁷¹ Over the same period, a further 31 crossed the barrier by way of *open* reconstruction competitions (they formed just over 7% of the successful competitors).⁷² This represents an annual promotion-and-transfer intake by way of competitions of some 40 a year during that period, apart from promotions and transfers in the normal form (there is no overlap between these cases and those included in the figure of 676 mentioned in the previous paragraph, but account is taken of them in estimating the ratio 4 to 3).

A third way of indicating the revolutionary extent of the war-time change in the practice of inter-class promotion is to compare the proportions of promotees in our 1950 and 1939 groups of higher civil servants. Instead of forming just over a fifth of the total, in 1950 they amounted to more than a third (35.9%). These figures are not conclusive by themselves, for it might have happened that the crossing of the barrier took place as a result of more liberal promotion policy before 1939, though the people concerned did not reach the rank of Assistant Secretary until some time between then and 1950. This possibility is, however, ruled out by a closer examination of the promotees in the 1950 group; more than half of them (51.9%) crossed the class barrier after

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1939. We are, therefore, fully justified in taking the difference between a fifth of the total in 1939 and a third in 1950 as an indication of the striking effects of wartime promotion policy. It may be added that 37·3% of the promotees in the 1950 group had risen from original Civil Service posts of clerical class or lower status.

Treasury figures have been published for 1950 giving a twofold division of the different ranks of the Administrative Class into direct entrants on the one hand and those promoted from other classes of the Service on the other;⁷³ no official figures have been published for any earlier date, so they cannot be used for comparison over time. It is of some interest to compare our 1950 proportions with those of the Treasury. In order to do so, we have to add to the 35·9% of cases of true promotion from the ranks a further 5·4% transferred from professional, scientific and technical posts, and 1·2% transferred from the Foreign and Diplomatic Service, etc. These proportions, when added, come to 42·5%, which is substantially less than the Treasury's 49·1% of the same group (Assistant Secretaries and above) promoted from other classes. The explanation of this apparent discrepancy is that many of those who entered the Civil Service during the war as 'temporaries' and were ultimately given established posts in the Administrative Class, were originally appointed to temporary positions in other classes of the Service. From the Treasury's point of view these people were not direct entrants but promotees. From our point of view it seemed more consistent with our pre-war classification of methods of entry to treat them as wartime direct entrants; the nature of the temporary post they originally held was, in the general confusion surrounding such appointments at the time, of minor importance. To obtain a figure of promotions-and-transfers for Treasury comparison we have, therefore, to add some of the 118 wartime direct entrants in our 1950 group. If we add half of them, the result closely approximates to the figure reached by the Treasury.

How did the proportion of promotees differ as between the different ranks of the Administrative Class? We have already seen that, in our 1929 and 1939 groups, there was a tendency for the proportion to be smaller in the higher ranks and larger in the lower. The same tendency is to be observed in our 1950 group,

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where the average promotion avenue percentage of 35.9 conceals a difference between those above the rank of Assistant Secretary (where the percentage is 23.5) and the Assistant Secretaries themselves (41.6%). The corresponding Treasury proportions of promotions-and-transfers are 37.1% for those above the rank of Assistant Secretary, and 54.6% for the Assistant Secretaries themselves. One obvious factor—that promotees tend to reach retiring age at a lower rank than others, because they have further to climb—undoubtedly accounts for some part of these observed differences. Another contributory factor may have been the prevailing belief, to which attention has already been drawn, that promoted men normally lacked certain qualities needed by administrators at the very top of the Service. We have no figures of our own for those below the rank of Assistant Secretary. The Treasury promotion-and-transfer percentage for Principals and Assistant Principals is 51.7, however, which is appreciably lower than that for Assistant Secretaries (54.6). The pre-war view that promoted men, for age and other reasons, often failed to get beyond the rank of Principal should perhaps, in the light of these figures, be revised by substituting the rank of Assistant Secretary instead.

In conclusion, something must be said about post-war promotion policy. The National Whitley Council has reached agreement on certain important issues.⁷⁴ The most important of these are that regular prospects of promotion to the Administrative Class from other classes are to be provided by Normal Limited Competitions, of which the first was held in July 1948. Between then and 30th September 1953, 63 people have crossed the barrier by this means, which replaces the old system of Departmental promotion so far as the Assistant Principal grade is concerned. The age limits for these new competitions are 21 to 28; the written part of the examination is adapted to suit the needs of candidates who are already engaged on a full-time job in the Service. 'Selection is on the same lines as in Method II of the Administrative Open Competition, i.e. by a qualifying written examination, followed for those who qualify by tests of personal qualities at the C.I.S.S.B. and final interview before the Final Selection Board.'⁷⁵ A prescribed proportion—20%—of the estimated Assistant Principal vacancies each year is reserved for filling in this way. The

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representatives of the lower classes of the Service have clearly learned one lesson from the experience of the inter-war years, namely that unless a proportion is agreed, understandings on promotion policy are apt to have very little meaning. In the light of the preceding historical account, the 20% proportion may seem a modest one. This percentage, however, only applies to the filling of junior posts in the Administrative Class. Promotion direct from other classes of the Service to administrative posts as Principals and Assistant Secretaries still takes place; and figures supplied by the Treasury make it possible to give a rough estimate of its importance. As can be seen from Table 4, during the last four or five years some 32% of the *new* recruits to the Administrative

TABLE 4

MAIN SOURCES OF NEW RECRUITS TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE CLASS
1ST APRIL 1949 TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 1953

	<i>First Administrative Rank Held</i>							
	<i>Assistant Principal</i>		<i>Principal</i>		<i>Assistant Secretary</i>		<i>These Three Ranks</i>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
(1) a. Open Competition Method I	155	56.6	—	—	—	—	155	34.7
(1) b. Open Competition Method II	69	25.2	—	—	—	—	69	15.4
(2) Limited Competition	50	18.2	—	—	—	—	50	11.2
(3) Promotion (from General or Departmental Executive Class)	—	—	116	85.3	25	67.6	141	31.5
(4) Transfer from Other Classes (except Foreign Service)	—	—	19	14.0	9	24.3	28	6.3
(5) Transfer from Foreign Service	—	—	1	0.7	3	8.1	4	0.9
All Five Sources	274	100.0	136	100.0	37	100.0	447	100.0

Note: This Table is based on figures supplied by the Civil Service Commission and the Treasury. Minor adjustments have had to be made because the two sets of data did not relate to exactly the same period of time; the *last* column should therefore only be taken as a broad guide. In the case of Assistant Principals, the figures relate to those certified as qualified for appointment; in the other cases they relate to appointments notified to the Treasury up to 30th September 1953.

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Class have been promoted from the General or Departmental Executive Class. Together with limited competition entrants this amounts to 43% or so of the new recruits to the three lowest ranks of the administrative hierarchy, compared with 50% by open competition and 7% by transfer from other branches of the Service. These proportions are not at all unlike those found amongst the higher civil servants of 1950; for if the 145 non-examination direct entrants from outside are excluded from the calculation, some 42% of the Higher Civil Service had been promoted from the ranks, while 51% had been recruited by open competition. The fact that promotees tend to be older than open competition entrants complicates the position, but it looks as though (if direct entrants otherwise than by examination are ignored) present promotion policy is likely to stabilize the 1950 proportions of higher civil servants who have entered the Administrative Class by the main available routes.

CHAPTER FOUR

ROUTES OF ENTRY TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE CLASS: OPEN COMPETITION

THE earlier reform of the Indian Civil Service and of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge paved the way for the reform of recruitment to the Civil Service at home. The story of these developments, and of the actual steps by which open competition became established as the standard means of entry, has been told so often that repetition is unnecessary.¹ The principal landmarks were, it will be remembered, the Northcote-Trevelyan *Report* of 1854; the institution of the Civil Service Commission in 1855; the setting-up in 1860 of a Select Committee to enquire into methods of appointing candidates for junior Civil Service posts; the 1867 franchise extension, rendering political patronage ineffective; the appointment as Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1869 of Robert Lowe, a believer in open competition; the Order in Council of 4th June 1870 directing that all vacancies of certain types should be filled in that way; and the subsequent Treasury regulations providing for open examinations for men of university standard to fill the higher posts, and for the use of tests of a lower educational standard in filling the lower ranks of the Service.

(a) 1870-1914

The main features of the open competition for higher posts in the early years were these. It was chiefly intended for candidates who had completed, or were completing, their university education. There was no bar on non-university candidates, and in the earliest scheme the age limits were 18-24; an age allowance was provided for those already in the lower ranks of the Service who

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wanted to compete.² In practice, however, only a very small proportion of those who succeeded were non-university men either from inside or outside the Civil Service. A second, and closely related, feature was that the subjects a candidate might offer were those in which one could take honours at a university (and this, to those responsible for the early competitions, meant Oxford and Cambridge). The intention was that men of the type whom it was proposed to recruit should be able to select their subjects for the Civil Service examination in such a way that no additional study was involved. No subjects were obligatory, and candidates could choose to be examined in as few or as many of them as they liked.

As time went on the Civil Service Commissioners attempted to remedy what they evidently regarded as defects in the earliest scheme. One of these defects was that candidates with only a superficial knowledge of their chosen subjects were, in some cases, proving more successful than those whose studies had been more profound. The absence of any limit on the number of subjects in which a candidate might choose to be examined made this possible. The first remedy adopted, in 1895, was to raise the lower age limit from 18 to 22, thereby excluding the non-university man who could not afford to wait until he reached that age before embarking on a career. At the same time it was announced that in future no candidate would be allowed any marks in respect of any subject unless he was considered to possess a competent knowledge of that subject. This was the beginning of a campaign against the 'mere smatterer' of the 1854 *Report*. Such people must be given no credit at all for taking up numerous subjects in preference to mastering a smaller number. The standard method of defeating them soon came to be the practice of *deducting* a fifth of the maximum number of marks from every candidate's score and then *adding* a quarter of the remainder. This was supplemented, in 1906, by a new rule whereby candidates could only select subjects up to a point where the aggregate of possible marks did not exceed 6,000.

A second defect was of precisely the opposite character. Candidates with too narrow a range of interests and knowledge were sometimes successful. The danger, as the Commissioners saw it, seemed to be that too many mathematicians and scientists who were ignorant of history and philosophy and perhaps even of English might find their way into the Service. It would be interest-

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ing to know how many such people did in fact slip through, and how their Service careers compared with those of the smatterers who entered before the regulations were tightened in 1895; there is reason to believe that some men of both types subsequently rose to be Heads of Departments, but no adequate study of this subject could be made on the basis of the available material. The Commissioners, at all events, were ill-disposed towards both, and accordingly in 1906 reduced the maximum marks to be obtained by specializing in mathematics and natural science.

In the course of the deliberations of the MacDonnell Commission, other criticisms of the open competition were discussed. By this time the same examination (sometimes with small modifications) was being used for posts outside the Home Civil Service. In 1895 the scheme for the Indian Civil Service had become identical except in age limits; in 1898 Eastern Cadetships were brought within its scope; while in 1908 and 1911 it was extended to clerkships in the Foreign Office and to certain Diplomatic and Consular posts. One of the main criticisms was that Oxford and Cambridge men had an unfair advantage over those of other universities. What was the nature of this unfair advantage? It was claimed that, despite continual additions to the list of subjects a candidate might take, the marks attached to individual subjects were so distributed as to make it easier for such men to make up the requisite total. In particular, Sir Richard Lodge pointed out that the Oxford man who took Classical Moderations and afterwards Greats might manage to make up his marks to the necessary total almost without going outside his university subjects; no other university honours course had such an advantage.³ Though this may have been partly accidental, there is little doubt that it was in part deliberate. This was virtually admitted by the committee that was later asked to consider the revision of the syllabus. 'Moreover, the conception of the existing scheme requires a wide range of instruction, and the classical course at Oxford, and to a less degree that of Cambridge, are the widest of university courses.'⁴

To the extent that this criticism was valid, the poor man's son was obviously penalized. As one witness observed, the bare minimum on which a student could manage at Oxford or Cambridge at that time was about £150, and that meant getting a scholarship both from his authority or school *and* one from the university or

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college.⁵ Apart from the question of the preferential treatment of Oxford and Cambridge, the poor man's son was at a disadvantage in several other ways. It was said of Leeds University, for instance, that 'among the class of parents from whom our students are drawn, the possibility of entering the Civil Service is at present very little known'.⁶ Similarly, the class of men who went to Scottish universities had no tradition of Government service in their families.⁷ A further disadvantage lay in the fact that taking the Civil Service examination involved something like a month's residence in London.⁸ Of course if one went to a crammer (a luxury the poor man's son could not in any case afford) the expense of living in London for a further one to three terms had to be added to the crammer's fees, for they all tended to be in London.⁹ And cramming was more of a necessity than a luxury. The chances of success without one were apparently rated very low, even by Oxford and Cambridge men. In 1910, for instance, out of 33 successful Cambridge candidates, 21 were at Wren's for six months or more, and 3 for seven weeks.¹⁰

The official answer to these criticisms was, of course, to deny that cramming was necessary, or that preferential treatment of Oxford and Cambridge existed, and to deplore the expense entailed in attending those universities. It was easy, moreover, to suggest that the figures of successful candidates were bound, for reasons beyond the control of the Commissioners, to include a preponderance of Oxford and Cambridge men. 'The system of scholarships . . . attracts to those places of learning a great proportion of the ablest students. If the results of the competition did not correspond to this fact, something would be wrong with the competition.'¹¹ Others, such as Viscount Haldane, hoped that things would right themselves when the newer universities had found their feet. 'I should be seriously disappointed if, in twenty-five years, the new universities do not send up a proportion of candidates very nearly approaching Oxford and Cambridge.'¹² If this prediction is taken to apply to *successful* candidates, it was not fulfilled; for the Oxford and Cambridge proportion, instead of falling from the 80% it represented when he spoke, rose to nearly 90% in the period 1933-9.

As an indirect result of the MacDonnell Commission's deliberations, however, certain alterations in the scheme of examinations

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were later recommended by another committee¹³ and ultimately (after 1921) put into force. The avowed purpose of the recommendations was to remedy defects in the existing examination arrangements. The revised distribution of marks for the main subjects, for instance, was designed to put on an equal footing the main schools of study at all the British universities. The danger that mathematicians and scientists with insufficient width of interests and knowledge would secure entry to the Service was now to be met, not by reducing the maximum marks for their subjects, but by introducing a new, compulsory section of the competition. This new section was to comprise an essay; a test of the understanding of English and the workmanlike use of words; questions on contemporary subjects, social, economic and political; questions on general principles, methods and applications of science; and translation from a foreign language. No one was likely to deny that these changes were desirable, though they did not meet all the criticisms that had been advanced. The other main recommendation of the committee—the introduction of a compulsory interview—was on an entirely different footing, and will be discussed below.

A broad indication can be given of the relative importance of open competition as a means of entry to administrative posts in the pre-war period. We do not know how many direct appointments from outside without examination, or transfers from other branches and Services, took place annually; but the average of two dozen competition appointments a year in the twenty years or so before the 1914–18 war was certainly the *main* source of new recruits, and promotion from the ranks, as we have seen, came very far behind. There is also the picture that can be built up by laboriously piecing together the scraps of information contained in the MacDonnell Commission evidence. This shows that if we take eleven of the main Departments (Treasury, Trade, Home Office, Colonial Office, Local Government, War Office, Admiralty, Customs and Excise, Inland Revenue, Post Office, Works), with an aggregate Higher Division and senior administrative staff of some 435 people, 336 of these were open competition entrants, 87 were promotees, and 12 were transferees or direct entrants without examination. Competition entrants therefore formed some 77% of the total, and since these Departments

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formed the bulk of the Home Civil Service at that date, this proportion is probably a reliable guide to their relative importance in 1911-12, except in the special case of the Board of Education, where open competition recruits were not employed.

(b) 1918-1939

Open competitions were suspended during the 1914-18 war, and for several years thereafter special reconstruction competitions took their place. The main features of these competitions (which are treated, in all statistical aggregates in the present study, as if they had been normal open competitions) were laid down in the *3rd Report* of the Gladstone Committee on recruitment for the Civil Service after the war. They were open to candidates who had been in the Forces and who might reasonably have intended to enter by the ordinary competitions if there had been no war. There was a preliminary sifting of application forms by the Civil Service Commission. This was followed by a qualifying examination in English, arithmetic and general knowledge. Those who had survived the preliminary sifting and had passed this relatively simple written examination were then interviewed by a selection board. On the basis of this interview they were placed in order of merit, and vacancies arising before the next similar competition took place were filled in accordance with that order. The considerations the selection board were to take into account were the candidate's educational record, military record, and special qualifications; the recommendations of referees; any special distinction in the qualifying examination; the qualities exhibited at the interview itself; and any wounds or other incapacity resulting from military service.

As a result of reconstruction competitions on this pattern held in 1919, 1920 and 1921, 203 Class I Clerks were appointed.¹⁴ Only 5 of these had not been in the Forces, and they had been medically unfit. Out of the 203, 13 had already had a short period of employment (usually a month or two) as temporary civil servants; they were described as having reached the standard necessary for success in the competition, but, rather surprisingly, no indication was given of their place in the general order of merit resulting from the interview. Amongst the 198 successful candidates who had been in the Forces, practically all had held commissioned rank. Very few pre-war established civil servants in lower classes

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were successful in these competitions; many were ineligible because of the age limits.

An obvious justification for using the interview as the main means of selection of these occasions was the interruption of their normal education that most of the candidates had suffered, and the fact that their wartime experiences might well have brought out qualities not easily tested by written examination. Normal open competitions were resumed, abortively in 1921 and effectively in 1925. The long delay was due, in large measure, to earlier over-estimation of the number of new recruits needed. When peacetime arrangements were eventually restored, they took the form recommended by the Leathes Committee in 1917. The main respects in which this differed from the pre-war pattern have already been explained. There remains to be discussed, however, the revolutionary change whereby an interview became an integral part of the normal open competition. The compulsory interview was a highly controversial departure from established procedure ever since the principle of open competition had first been introduced. How did this come about, and what were the reasons for such a fundamental change of policy? What was it hoped to discover in this way, and which candidates were likely to be excluded by the type of interview introduced?

The mere sequence of events is clear enough. The MacDonnell Commission, reporting in 1914, had mentioned the possibility of a *viva voce* without making any definite proposal.¹⁵ They did suggest, however, that the syllabus ought to be re-examined; and the Treasury Committee appointed for that purpose included in their 1917 *Report* the recommendation that an interview to test alertness, intelligence and intellectual outlook should form part of the examination.¹⁶ This proposal was duly acted upon in 1921, and forms the justification for the change of policy at that time. The MacDonnell Commission had, however, almost certainly not intended that a matter of such fundamental importance, on which they themselves were in doubt, should be settled in this way. They suggested the appointment of a committee to see whether there was any foundation for the misgiving that the existing syllabus unduly favoured Oxford and Cambridge; there was not even a hint that the introduction of a *viva voce* should come within their scope.¹⁷ The Civil Service Commissioners, in a lengthy letter to

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the Treasury explaining why the Committee was urgently needed, made no mention of such a topic,¹⁸ and the terms of reference are also silent on the question.¹⁹ It is of some interest and importance, therefore, to discover who wanted this change of policy, and what reasons they had for thinking that it was either necessary or desirable.

The great majority of the Heads of Departments interviewed by the MacDonnell Commission were given an opportunity to express an opinion on two matters directly relating to this question. First, they were asked whether there was any noticeable change in the quality of those recruited through the Class 1 examination. Secondly, their opinion was sought on the desirability of some form of *viva voce* to supplement the written examination. In the main their answers suggested that they thought the quality of entrants was as high as, or higher than, it had been either in the earlier period of the open competition or in the days of patronage appointments. And most of them were satisfied that entry by that route should continue to depend on order of merit in a wholly written examination. To some extent this may have been due to the tendency to be satisfied with things as they are, popularly believed to be found in all ranks of the Civil Service at all times. Even making allowance for this possibility, however, the numerical weight of opinion seems genuinely to have been that there was no deterioration in the quality of entrants which would call for a fundamental change in the method of choosing new recruits. The views of certain key officials, however, undoubtedly carried special weight with the Commission, and it is worth looking at one or two of these.

Sir George Murray, who had until recently been Permanent Secretary to the Treasury, spoke in the course of his evidence of the greater difficulty experienced in the latter part of his career in finding men to fill the highest places.²⁰ This disappointment in his expectations is later quoted by the Treasury Committee;²¹ and it is true that his following remarks advocated open competition tempered by selection, in which the Head of Department would make enquiries about the candidate 'and his training and antecedents'.²² The value of Sir George's testimony as support for the policy ultimately adopted is, however, completely destroyed by two other observations in the course of his evidence. First, the

introduction of an interview was not, in his view, practical politics; and secondly, in his final summing-up, 'it is quite certain that, neither by the methods we have been speaking of nor by those of written examination can you ever ascertain whether a man is going to develop into what you will want him to be twenty years afterwards'.²³

Another Treasury spokesman, Sir Robert Chalmers (Sir George Murray's successor), gave his reasons for opposing the idea of an interview. Candidates would have a feeling that they were taken from a very clear field without favour into one where it would be noticed if they came from a different social stratum, and where they would be subject 'to tests and to criticisms which were of a class character'.²⁴ Such possibilities also seem to have troubled Mr. Leathes, First Civil Service Commissioner, whose early evidence is particularly worth quoting in view of the part he was later to play in bringing about the change. 'I should not be prepared to upset the result of an important and elaborate competition on the ground that I did not think so-and-so was the kind of man who was wanted for the Civil Service; at least I should be very loth to do it. There might be cases in which it would be right, but there would always remain a feeling of injustice and arbitrariness about it which, unless the importance of competition was very much diminished, would rankle in people's minds.'²⁵ However, by the final stages of the Royal Commission's deliberations Mr. Leathes had modified his position, and advocated in his evidence the introduction of a *viva voce* on some subject of the candidate's own choosing, the examiners being at liberty to ask him questions on matters of common knowledge as well.²⁶ It was to be a test of mental alertness. His Director of Examinations, Mr. Mair, raised a much more dangerous point when he said, in a letter quoted by another witness, that a written examination 'could not take account of such things as bearing and manners. Some Departments, too, were not entirely satisfied with certain of their clerks provided by competitive examinations, because they were not altogether fitted to deal with the public. They were too exclusively scholars and not sufficiently men of the world.'²⁷ These seem to have been the only two senior civil servants of the day whose published views appeared to support the introduction of some kind of interview as part of the Class I examination; and the outcome

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might well have been entirely different had they not been chosen as Chairman and Secretary of the Treasury Committee charged with the revision of the syllabus.

Opinion outside the Civil Service on this issue was apparently more evenly divided. The MacDonnell Commission, though not themselves able to make any recommendation on the matter, called attention to the fact that the proposal was strongly supported by a university witness from Dublin, and was approved by three other university representatives.²⁸ Two points should, however, be noted. First, the plan to which the Commission were referring was a *viva voce* based on the syllabus of the papers chosen by the candidate, a very different proposal from the interview as finally introduced in the 1920s. The intention was twofold: to give a second chance to those who had not done themselves justice in the examination, and to eliminate those whose knowledge consisted of mere cramming. Secondly, it should be noted that at least as many of the university witnesses were strongly opposed to the idea that an interview should form part of the examination. Sir Richard Lodge regarded it as a fallacious test.²⁹ Professor Vaughan, asked whether he thought that the capacity of doing justice to yourself in a personal interview was one of the qualities required in a civil servant, replied 'so much depends on mere shyness: I think you would have excluded Mr. Pitt on those principles'.³⁰ Professor Medley stressed the danger that candidates from Scottish universities might fare badly when interviewed by a board accustomed only to assessing people of their own social class. 'Our men are not English public school boys . . . they are quite a different type, and they have not had the same opportunities; they have not the same outward polish and outside manner. So that unless there was someone on the committee who understood their kind and gave them a fair chance, they would come off very hardly.'³¹

Some of the members of the MacDonnell Commission were certainly anxious to test the opinion of as many witnesses as possible on the desirability of introducing a *viva voce* for Class I entrants. One reason for their interest in the topic was undoubtedly that interviews had recently formed the method of recruiting the staff of the new Labour Exchanges. It soon became clear, however, that there was a vital difference involved here, for it

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had been a question of rapid selection from a field of candidates varying widely in age, education and practical experience; written examinations would, in these circumstances, have been virtually impossible. Moreover doubts were felt about the success of a method where, out of 73 managers of Labour Exchanges appointed on the recommendation of an interviewing committee presided over by Mr. Leathes, 21 % had within a few years been dismissed, asked to resign or down-graded, and a further 6 % had left of their own accord.³²

Summarizing the position, it appears that there was no clear evidence of poor or declining quality amongst Class 1 entrants, and that hardly anyone in the Civil Service was prepared publicly to support the introduction of a *viva voce* for such recruits. And although some senior members of university staffs approved such a proposal, they had in mind a further test of knowledge and ability within the field chosen by the candidate; while many of their colleagues were opposed to the inclusion of any kind of interview.

The Leathes Committee, in recommending that a *viva voce* should henceforth form part of the examination, reflected none of these misgivings and divisions of opinion. A recent Consultative Committee on scholarships for higher education (of which Mr. Leathes himself had been a member) had, rather surprisingly, expressed views on the Class 1 examination. 'It should be a test of training as well as a test of knowledge. It should include a *viva voce* examination.'³³ This cryptic remark, in which the nature of the proposed interview is unexplained, was quoted in the report of the Leathes Committee to show that their intended change of policy had strong educational backing. They then proceeded to explain what they had in mind.³⁴ Qualities might be shown in this way which could not be tested in a written examination, but which should be useful to public servants. These apparently included alertness, intelligence and intellectual outlook; presence of mind and nervous equipoise were also important, and candidates who showed nervousness under interview conditions might, in fact, be held to lack a valuable quality. The examiners should be accustomed to handling young men and putting them at their ease. The examination was to be in matters of general interest, on which every young man ought to have something to say. The idea that the candidate should be questioned on the subjects he had

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chosen in the examination, which was the essence of the scheme supported by some of the university witnesses before the MacDonnell Commission, and which also figured in the Leathes proposal at that time, was silently abandoned. The weight attached to the interview was to be 300 marks out of 1800 or 1900, and this 'should not infrequently help a useful man to success or save the State from a bad bargain'.³⁵

This, then, was the origin and justification of the type of oral examination to which, as a compulsory supplement to their written tests, all open competition candidates for the Administrative Class of the Home Civil Service were subjected during the inter-war period. The qualities to be tested and the means of testing them were ill-defined, and the dangers in the whole procedure had clearly been quite inadequately considered. The 300-mark allocation was the Chairman's compromise between the figures suggested by other members of the Committee.³⁶ With so little to guide them, everything would depend on the character and ability of the members of the interviewing board and, above all, of the First Commissioner acting as Chairman. The evidence of those who held this office during the inter-war years is, therefore, invaluable, not merely as showing what they were trying to do, but also as affording a basis for judging the type of candidate likely to fare well or ill at an interview conducted under their auspices.

The pattern was set during the Leathes period, lasting until his retirement at the end of 1927. 'My own plan is to fish about for a topic in which the candidate is interested; if I can find something on which he is willing to converse, one thing leads to another, and I firmly believe that you get your best and truest impression of the candidate if once you can get him moving easily in conversation. It doesn't matter to my mind at all what he talks about. Literature I have seldom found to be a good draw.'³⁷ An equally disarming account is given by Mr. Meiklejohn, who held office during the remainder of the period ending in 1939. 'Directly the young man comes in I try to put him at his ease, by looking at his record, and saying, "You were at Rugby: you went on from there to Corpus, you got a scholarship there." . . . One of the others says, "Have you been abroad much?" . . . You ask him almost anything which occurs to you to find out what his interests are,

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and how he reacts to other people and things.'³⁸ Little perspicacity is required to see how this kind of approach would prejudice the chances of a candidate from the lower social strata, where no point of contact, in his educational career or elsewhere, existed between him and the Chairman. Such a candidate, far from being put at his ease, might well tend to become more and more uncomfortable as the interview proceeded. The recital of the names of his particular schools and university would be unlikely to establish a bond of sympathy between him and the members of the board. His failure to travel abroad would be too easily attributed to narrowness of outlook or lack of the spirit of adventure rather than to the necessity of earning a living during vacations. The hit-and-miss plan of fishing about for a topic would tend, especially as time was invariably short, to press hardly on a candidate whose interests did not happen to conform to the Chairman's idea of 'questions on which every young man should have something to say'. And his failure to swallow the early bait thrown to him must of itself convey the impression that he lacked two of the principal qualities, alertness and width of interests, for which interview marks were given.

Nor was this all. Though it was strenuously denied that the system operated to the disadvantage of those of humble origin who lacked the polish and assurance associated with a different social background, it was at the same time stated (with a bland disregard for the incompatibility of the two claims) that one purpose of the interview was to test 'the general address [and] good manners' of the candidate.³⁹ For this extension of aims there would seem to have been no warrant; apart from their reference to nervous equipoise, the Treasury Committee were particularly careful to use terms which would, at least on the surface, be free from any taint of class prejudice; it was a matter of determining 'the candidate's alertness, intelligence, and intellectual outlook, his personal qualities of mind and mental equipment'.⁴⁰ The fears of those who, like the Glasgow University witness, had foreseen that, once a *viva voce* was introduced, manners might easily become a deciding factor in appointment, proved in the event to be only too well founded.

A case could, of course, have been made out for the suggestion that the social graces were important for those aspiring to high

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office in the Civil Service. The increasing need for tact could be stressed. Sir Warren Fisher, speaking for the Treasury, listed some of the qualities necessary for a man of affairs, on which written examinations alone did not provide conclusive evidence; 'qualities of heart which make men, for instance, good mixers, good leaders, good judges of their fellow-men, and able to carry conviction where the hammer blows of intellect and logic by themselves may merely antagonize'.⁴¹ Public opinion, however, accustomed for so long to the idea of intellectual ability as the sole criterion of direct entry to the Home Administrative Class, would at that time have rebelled against any proposal to modify this position. The flexibility of interview procedure and aims allowed a situation to develop which would never have been accepted if the fact that a change of policy was involved had been more widely known.

The official answer to those who had grave doubts about the whole proceeding was not limited to mere denials of class bias. A safeguard against any such possibility, it was said, lay in the fact that there were four members of the board in addition to the Chairman. These colleagues were generally 'a member with Indian experience, a lady of scholastic or academic experience, and two others [who had, in recent years, been] professors of eminence and a gentleman with wide city and foreign business experience. It has always been the endeavour of the Commissioners to secure that as far as possible the personnel of the interviewing board should be representative, not only of Oxford and Cambridge, but of the other universities.'⁴² The composition of the board clearly left very limited scope for the fulfilment of this last condition. The process of selection from amongst those eligible, as described by Sir Stanley Leathes, is reminiscent of the time-honoured method of choosing part-time University Extension lecturers. 'We try to choose people who have broad sympathies. . . . You get the advice of your friends; you get people you know. . . . You give them a trial trip.'⁴³ Far from allaying fears, these disclosures of the narrow social circle from which the interviewers were in practice recruited lent additional support to the contention that, consciously or otherwise, the results of the *viva voce* would be to lessen the chances of entry of working and lower-middle class candidates.

Little criticism of a policy decision brought into operation in

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the comparatively recent past was to be expected from Heads of Departments in their evidence before the Tomlin Commission. Nor did the First Division Association, a substantial proportion of whose members owed their initial appointments in the Civil Service to successful performance at interviews in the reconstruction competitions of 1919-21, want to do away with the *viva voce*. Representatives of other ranks, however, were strongly opposed to interviews for direct entrants to the Administrative Class. Thus the staff side of the National Whitley Council wanted to do away with the *viva* altogether, because of its dangers, and to rely on the probation period in the Service for weeding out obviously unsuitable people.⁴⁴ Unfortunately their whole approach to the problem was so naïve that it could easily be brushed aside. Instead of pointing out that the method of conducting the interview, though ostensibly fair to everyone, placed certain types of candidate at a grave disadvantage, they played into the hands of their opponents by suggesting that the class bias was both open and crude. 'The object of the interview should be to test the knowledge and ability of the candidate for the post in question and should not be used to ascertain his origin or social status.'⁴⁵ The obvious answer to such a charge was that the *viva voce* was not concerned with such matters; the candidate's schooling, and his father's occupation, were in any case previously known to the Commission, so there was no need to question him on this subject at the interview. The whole idea could easily be disposed of by Sir Warren Fisher as the most complete bunkum. 'I think the information as to a person's origin is quite irrelevant. When I am looking at a fellow really I am not concerned with what his father was: I am concerned with what he is.'⁴⁶ Such charges, which only served to provoke righteous indignation of this type, destroyed any hope there might have been of a review of the whole interview procedure. To the Tomlin Commission, the gradual widening of the range of schools from which successful candidates were drawn was all the proof needed to justify the *status quo*.⁴⁷

Not all informed outside observers with experience of interview procedure were as complacent as this, however. Sir William Beveridge's attitude to the *viva voce*, for instance, contrasted strongly with the confidence of successive First Commissioners. 'I am rather suspicious of it, very suspicious of it, but I have not

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got any absolute evidence on which to base my suspicions . . . I distrust my own tendency to be misled.'⁴⁸ Professor A. D. Lindsay favoured interviewing as an intellectual test supplementary to a written one, 'because you get people who are very good examination subjects, who are nevertheless fools. At an interview you can see that they are stupid.'⁴⁹ As an examiner at the time of the reconstruction competitions, when written tests were largely impracticable, he thought the very thorough interviews, at which very full reports from those who knew the candidate best had been available, had worked well. About the normal *viva* for Administrative Class entrants he had grave doubts, however. 'When we just had a young man in front of us and had to engage him in conversation, the interview test seemed to be much more difficult, and more chancy. I thought that mistakes were made.'⁵⁰ The candidate had not yet taken the written examination, so there was nothing to serve as an interviewer's guide. 'You are really fishing in the dark. You may hit, and you may not. It is very difficult to do it . . . without any lead, not knowing what the opinions of the candidate are.'⁵¹ And speaking of fellow members of the board who had not done this sort of thing before, 'it seemed to my poor judgment that they were entirely taken in by so to speak incidental things'.⁵²

Despite this damning indictment of the Leathes-Meiklejohn interview procedure, the Tomlin Commission saw no reason for change. There were no grounds for any suspicion of class prejudice; though as they had not called for any statistics throwing light on that problem, the lack of evidence to support such a charge was not altogether surprising. They were a little puzzled by some unexpectedly large variations between the marks awarded at the interview test to candidates who competed more than once for the same Class, but did not press the point.⁵³ They regarded as generally satisfactory the proportion of the total marks assigned to the interview, an opinion apparently arrived at in no less haphazard a way than the original choice of 300 marks by the Leathes Committee. Even the inadequacy of the average length of interview—a quarter of an hour or so—was allowed to pass unchallenged, as well as the meagre provision for the opinions of referees who might know something about the candidate. In resisting change the Tomlin Commission, of course, must not be

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denied the credit of having prevented the interview for the Home Administrative Class from becoming an even more potent weapon for the exercise of class prejudice. They did not, for instance, accept a recommendation of Mr. Meiklejohn, who had such confidence in his *viva* procedure that he would have liked to make it a preliminary interview qualifying candidates to proceed to the written examination. Under this arrangement candidates only obtaining, say, 50 out of 300 marks would be weeded out altogether (as in Foreign Service recruitment practice at that time), however good their performance might have proved to be in the remainder of the competition.⁵⁴

For the rest of the pre-war period, therefore, the *viva* continued to operate, to all appearances, on much the same lines as before, and continued to prejudice the chances of direct entry to the Home Administrative Class of people who would most probably have provided a valuable social leaven. Two modifications were, however, introduced. A witness had mentioned in evidence that he failed to see how, in an oral examination of this kind, it was possible to arrive at assessments of candidates so detailed that their interview scores sometimes differed by only one or two marks.⁵⁵ From that time forward only points at wide, equally spaced intervals on the scale were awarded, and marks intermediate between these were never again used. The other modification was a more serious one. In 1937, incidental to some changes in the marks awarded for the different parts of the examination, the importance of the *viva* was substantially increased; instead of 300 out of an aggregate of 1800, the interview was now to have a weight of 300 out of 1300.

It was odd, to say the least, that the weight attached to the *viva* should actually have been increased at a time when independent investigation had recently cast doubt on the value of interviews of this type. As a result of an International Conference on Examinations held in May 1931 at Eastbourne, an investigation was undertaken into, *inter alia*, the reliability of an interview conducted on the same lines as were employed in the examinations for the Administrative Class. The findings of this enquiry were presented to a second conference held in June 1935 at Folkestone, and were published in the same year.⁵⁶ Great care was taken to secure candidates who would have been eligible for the Civil

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Service Examination; to draw from a panel of examiners who had done assessing of this kind; and to conduct the interviews as nearly as possible on the lines of the case being studied (e.g. fishing about for a topic). Every candidate was seen by two boards, and a mark was awarded to him by each of the nine examiners independently as well as by both the boards collectively. The range (20–30%) and the average (12%) of the differences between the marks awarded by the two boards pointed clearly, in the view of the investigators, to the unreliability of this interview test. The evidence on which the examiners could judge the candidate was so different in the two cases as almost to mask the common influence of the same set of candidates. Success or failure seemed mainly to depend on something which was largely a matter of chance, namely on whether the examiners happened to light upon a topic which gave that particular candidate the scope and the opportunity he needed to show his good qualities.

It was not the purpose of the Hartog-Rhodes investigation to consider the possibility of social bias at such interviews, and neither in the selection of candidates nor in the analysis of the results was this an objective. The conclusion just quoted, however, needs very little extension to illustrate the likelihood that interviews of this kind will give an advantage to those with the same kind of education and social background as the members of the interviewing board. For nearly everything depends on the suitability of the topic selected for the individual candidate; and a matching of topic and candidate is more likely to be achieved, even without conscious bias, the more closely the candidate's interests and experiences resemble those of the members of the board.

A few years later, in 1937, the Institute of Public Administration held a Summer Conference at Cambridge on the use of the interview in recruitment and promotion. Mr. Stuart-Bunning, summing up the results of this conference, says that no evidence, and no sustained argument, was produced in favour of the interview of the Administrative Class type. 'All we got was, "Leave it to me and all will be well."'⁵⁷ The nearest approach to a reasoned defence of the system at this time was provided by Mrs. M. A. Hamilton, who enjoyed interviewing, had done it for the Administrative Class, and had faith in the procedure. 'I did not . . . find that it was prejudiced in favour of the Public School entrant—

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although I had been specifically warned that I should find it so; on the contrary, most members were so well aware that they were expected to entertain that prejudice that they were apt, if anything, to prefer a Midland to an Oxford accent. And any sign of any sort of prejudice in any one mind on the Board instantly set up a contrary wave in another.'⁵⁸ Plausible though these arguments may sound, they do little to weaken the suggestion, made above, regarding the crucial importance of similarity of interests and background between candidates and board members if a suitable topic is to be hit upon in a short interview. Nor do they really dispose of the contention that interviews of this type are necessarily influenced by superficial characteristics. As one writer puts it, 'a "nice" boy, with engaging manners and a pleasant accent, has a greater chance of having his relevant qualities assessed excessively than the rough diamond has of securing arithmetical justice'.⁵⁹

The fact that the marks obtained by successful open competition entrants to junior posts in the Administrative Class are published, in a form enabling the interview mark to be separated from that arising from the written part of the examination, provides the opportunity of making a number of interesting comparisons. Was there, for instance, any association between the type of school attended by these entrants and the award of relatively high or low marks? If we take the marks obtained by the 177 classifiable open competition entrants during the six years before the 1914-18 war, when the examination was wholly a written one, we find that there is no significant difference between the average mark of the 50 who had been at Clarendon schools⁶⁰ as against the 127 who had not, or between the 77 who had been at predominantly boarding-schools and the 100 who had been at day schools (see Table 5). The material for the inter-war period, 1925-39, yields rather different results. In the written part of the examination, the 301 from predominantly day schools were awarded higher marks than the 183 from boarding-schools; the 86 boys from Clarendon schools obtained lower marks than the 398 entrants from other schools; and both these differences were highly significant.⁶¹ The marks of the 95 entrants from schools administered by local education authorities in 1939 were significantly higher than those of the 389 from other schools.

TABLE 5

MARKS OBTAINED BY OPEN COMPETITION ENTRANTS TO THE HOME ADMINISTRATIVE CLASS
(EXCLUDING UNCLASSIFIABLE SCHOOL CASES)

<i>Written Work or Interview</i>	<i>Period</i>	<i>School Categories Compared</i>	<i>Number of Cases</i>	<i>Mean \pm Standard Error</i>	<i>Significance of Observed Differences (t tests)</i>
<i>Written Work</i>	1909-14	Clarendon Schools	50	2737.32 \pm 58.70	Not significant
		Other Schools	127	2759.01 \pm 36.35	
	1925-39	Predominantly Boarding-Schools	77	2742.95 \pm 48.75	Not significant
		Predominantly Day Schools	100	2766.96 \pm 46.51	
		Clarendon Schools	86	1014.06 \pm 9.56	Highly significant
		Other Schools	398	1041.51 \pm 3.92	
		Predominantly Boarding-Schools	183	1021.19 \pm 7.07	Highly significant
		Predominantly Day Schools	301	1048.93 \pm 2.79	
		Schools administered by Local Education Authorities in 1939	95	1056.00 \pm 10.35	Significant
		Other Schools	389	1032.33 \pm 5.06	
<i>Interview</i>	1925-39	Clarendon Schools	86	263.33 \pm 3.68	Highly significant
		Other Schools	398	241.45 \pm 2.27	
		Predominantly Boarding-Schools	183	256.92 \pm 3.00	Highly significant
		Predominantly Day Schools	301	240.68 \pm 2.51	
		Schools administered by Local Education Authorities in 1939	95	228.67 \pm 5.24	Highly significant
		Other Schools	389	250.10 \pm 2.15	

Note: For the purpose of the statistical tests, it was necessary to reduce the marks obtained in the *written* examination after 1925, to a common standard. This was done by taking a base year and proportionately increasing or decreasing the marks obtained in other years where necessary.

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When we turn to the marks these entrants were awarded at their interviews, this position is reversed. On their showing at a 15- or 20-minute interview, entrants from Clarendon schools scored higher marks than those from other schools, entrants from predominantly boarding-schools did better than those from day schools, and those from schools administered by local education authorities scored lower marks than entrants from other types of school. And all three of these differences are statistically highly significant. A reasonable inference from the figures so far put forward would be that, in the inter-war period, the interview was probably tending to modify the schools-origin pattern of entrants in a particular direction, favouring those from Clarendon schools and boarding-schools, and handicapping those from schools administered by local education authorities. This inference, as will be shown later, is amply borne out by an analysis of the whole field of candidates in one pre-war year, 1938.

The marks obtained by open competition entrants can usefully be related to yet another factor, the degree of career success achieved. Because open competition entrants start in the same rank at roughly the same age, comparisons between them on the basis of the number of years taken to reach particular ranks are, within certain limits, legitimate. It is important that they should have entered the Service in roughly the same period, and that promotion before the outbreak of the 1939-45 war should be separated from promotion at a later date. Differences in promotion opportunities resulting from having been posted to different Departments, though they may well have a bearing on individual careers, are unlikely to affect the average experience of groups chosen on a school basis, or to be distributed otherwise than randomly as between those with varying marks on entry. Table 6 summarizes the results obtained by comparing marks on entry with the time taken to reach certain ranks. It will be seen that, amongst entrants by competitions held in the six years 1909-14, there was a significant correlation between high marks awarded at the written examination and rapidity of promotion to the rank of Assistant Secretary in the period before 1939. This did not hold good for promotion to the previous rank, possibly because seniority was, in the 1920s, the main determinant in these cases. Amongst entrants by competitions held between 1925 and 1939, however,

TABLE 6

CORRELATION BETWEEN THE MARKS GAINED BY OPEN COMPETITION ENTRANTS TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE
CLASS AND THE NUMBER OF YEARS TAKEN TO REACH CERTAIN RANKS

<i>Period of Open Competition Entry</i>	<i>Period within which rank was reached</i>	<i>Promotion to</i>	<i>Number of Cases</i>	<i>Coefficient Relating Promotion to Mark Gained</i>		<i>Significance of Differences between Coefficients</i>
				<i>(1) In Written Examination</i>	<i>(2) At Interview</i>	
1909-14	Before 1939	P.	140	- 0.093 (not sig.)	Not applicable	—
		A.S.	102	- 0.613 (signif.)	Not applicable	—
		Higher Ranks	Too few cases	—	—	—
	1939-50	All Ranks	Too few cases	—	—	—
1925-39	Before 1939	P.	118	- 0.494 (signif.)	- 0.245 (signif.)	Significantly different
	1939-50	P.	298	- 0.036 (not sig.)	- 0.167 (not sig.)	—
		A.S.	276	- 0.417 (signif.)	- 0.261 (signif.)	Significantly different
		P.A.S. or U.S.	83	- 0.408 (signif.)	- 0.279 (signif.)	Not significantly dif- ferent
		Higher Ranks	Too few cases	—	—	—

Note: For the purpose of this Table it was necessary to reduce the marks obtained at the written examinations after 1925 to a common standard.

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there was a significant correlation between both written examination and interview marks on the one hand, and rapidity in reaching the rank of Principal before 1939. Under war and post-war conditions this association ceased to be noticeable, though it was significant in relation to the two next ranks in the hierarchy. The correlation, it will be noticed, is significantly greater as between marks for written work and career success than it is in the case of interview marks and speed of promotion. This would seem to provide adequate statistical support for the view that, though both parts of the competition machinery were functioning reasonably successfully in broad career-success prediction, the written examination was a better guide to the possession of qualities making for rapid promotion than the pre-war 15 or 20 minute interview.

When we pass from marks obtained on entry to the other factor (type of school) that can usefully be compared with career success, the problem of defining this latter term arises. The basis of the definition has, of course, to be that of reaching a particular rank by a certain age, or after so many years in the Service. Various combinations of ages and ranks were tried out. In one part of the statistical analysis, for instance, first degree success was defined as having reached the rank of Principal Assistant Secretary or Under Secretary by the age of forty; second degree success consisted in reaching the rank of Assistant Secretary by then; and the rest were counted as failures. These and other combinations all produced similar results. There proved to be no significant difference, amongst those who entered by the open competitions of 1909-14, between the career success of boys from Clarendon schools and those from other schools, or between those with a boarding-school and a day-school background.⁶² The same lack of association between type of school and career success was found amongst open competition entrants of the 1925-39 period.

So far our discussion of the relationships between the various known characteristics of those who took part in open competitions has been confined to the successful candidates. Only for one year, 1938, has it been possible, by permission of the Civil Service Commissioners, to make a detailed analysis of the *unsuccessful* candidates as well.⁶³ The results of this analysis are extremely interesting. First of all, as mentioned elsewhere in the present study, the successful group was found to contain significantly more

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candidates from boarding-schools, and significantly fewer from secondary schools administered by the local education authority, than the unsuccessful group. By itself, this would merely show that the process of selection by a combination of written examination and interview resulted in the emergence of a sample biased in favour of boarding and public schools. This might be because candidates from these schools tended to be better academically, or because they tended to obtain higher interview marks; or it might be due to a combination of both factors. Secondly, therefore, the cases were analysed on the basis of their marks for written work and their interview marks taken separately. For this purpose it was thought best to exclude the 44 women candidates, as well as 11 men whose overseas schools could not easily be fitted into our categories. This left 278 men; 83 of them came from secondary schools administered by local education authorities, against 195 from boarding-schools, and independent and direct-grant day schools; comparing predominantly boarding with predominantly day schools, 107 came from the former and 171 from the latter. On their written work, the mean mark of those from local education authority schools was virtually the same as that of candidates from other schools. The mean mark of boarding-school boys was *lower* than the day school average, but the difference was not quite great enough to be statistically significant. In the matter of academic attainment measured by marks awarded in the written examination, therefore, there seems to have been little variation according to school-type origin, except that boarding-school boys showed a tendency to gain slightly lower marks than day-school boys.

It is when we turn to marks awarded at the interview that the real reason for the bias in the selected sample emerges. The mean interview mark awarded to candidates from schools controlled by local education authorities was less than the average obtained by those from other types of school (see Table 7). Those with the advantage of a boarding-school education were given better interview marks, on an average, than their day school competitors. And both these differences proved to be highly significant. Whether this bias was justified, in the sense that boarding and public school boys tended to make better civil servants, obviously cannot be determined from these figures.

TABLE 7

ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW MARKS AWARDED AT THE 1938 OPEN COMPETITION FOR JUNIOR POSTS
IN THE HOME ADMINISTRATIVE CLASS TO SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL MALE CANDIDATES
WHOSE SCHOOLS COULD BE GROUPED INTO CERTAIN BROAD CATEGORIES

<i>School Categories Compared</i>	<i>Number of Cases</i>	<i>Mean (M) ± Standard Error</i>	<i>σ Standard Deviation</i>	$\frac{\sigma}{M} \times 100$ <i>Coefficient of Variation</i>	<i>Significance of Observed Differences (t tests)</i>
(1) Secondary schools administered by local education authorities in 1939	83	188.55 ± 6.32	57.57	30.53	The difference between the means is highly significant
(2) Other U.K. secondary schools	195	212.56 ± 3.79	52.91	24.89	The difference between the coefficients of variation is significant
(3) Predominantly boarding-schools in U.K.	107	217.99 ± 5.10	52.73	24.19	The difference between the means is highly significant
(4) Predominantly day schools in U.K.	171	197.51 ± 4.25	55.59	28.15	The difference between the coefficients of variation is not significant

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They do, however, lend valuable statistical support to the contention that pre-war interview boards were favourably impressed by the speech, manners and general bearing associated with a public school background. The anonymity of a written examination seems to have secured equality of treatment for candidates of varying school origin; the interview, intentionally or unintentionally, wisely or unwisely, apparently did not do so.

How important was all this in terms of an actual denial of opportunity to enter the Administrative Class? After all, the *viva voce* was not a *qualifying* one; interview boards were surely powerless to prevent those of outstanding academic ability from entering the Service. In order to throw light on this problem, a third type of analysis of the 1938 material was undertaken. How would the group of 76 candidates qualifying for the offer of a post have differed if the interview were ignored, if order-of-merit had depended entirely on the written examination? A rearrangement on this basis showed that 18 unsuccessful candidates would have changed places with 18 of the original 76. In other words, nearly 24% of the successful candidates owed their offer of a job to the favourable impression they had created at the interview, which enabled them to displace competitors who, on an assessment of *academic* ability, would have been preferred. An interview resulting in a turnover of this magnitude was clearly of major importance, and cannot be dismissed as the mere weeding-out of a few unsuitable people. To supplement the earlier analysis, therefore, it was decided to examine these two groups of 18 people each, to see what differences there were between them.

It was realized at the outset, of course, that the very smallness of these groups would make it unlikely that any observed differences would stand up to tests of statistical significance. These observed differences would still, however, be worth recording; they might at least show tendencies, and if these were confirmed by the results of the earlier analysis, some reliance could be placed upon them. To avoid confusion, the 18 people who owed the offer of a post to a successful interview will be described as group A, while those whom they displaced will be referred to as group B. Only two members of group A had *not* been to either Oxford or Cambridge (unfortunately making a statistical cell too small for validation); in group B, on the other hand, eight of the members

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were in this position. Of group A, 10 had come from predominantly boarding-schools, while only 4 of group B had done so. In the case of group B, on the other hand, 9 people had been educated at secondary schools administered by local education authorities, compared with only 3 in the case of group A. All these differences, though they cannot be described as statistically significant, suggest tendencies of the same kind as the highly significant differences described above when the interview marks of candidates were related to their school-type origins. As a further step, the occupations of the fathers of these 36 people were obtained from birth registration records. Arranging these occupations in the Registrar-General's Social Classes, it was found that, whereas 13 members of group A had fathers in Social Class categories I and II, only 7 members of group B had fathers in these categories, and this difference proved to be statistically significant.

(c) *Since 1945*

Apart from the increased weight attached to the interview after 1937, by a reduction in the aggregate of marks while maintaining the interview mark at the earlier figure, there had been no published indication of widespread official dissatisfaction with the broad lines of the inter-war open competition arrangements. It now appears, however, that the Commissioners found these arrangements not wholly satisfactory in two respects.⁶⁴ (1) Because they occasionally enabled a candidate to succeed in spite of the award of a very poor mark for his personal qualities. The interview, as we have seen, was not a *qualifying* one; yet the weight attaching to it in the aggregate of marks must, particularly after the 1937 change, have made it highly exceptional for anyone with a really poor interview mark (such as 50 out of 300) ever to be offered a junior administrative post in the Home Civil Service. Indeed, our figures show that out of 493 people who entered by the open competition route between 1921 and 1939, only in one single case was there an interview mark as low as 50, and only in four cases (including the previous one) did those with marks as low as 100 take up duties. The number with 150 marks or less was only 14, or 3% of the total. Despite the highly exceptional nature of such cases, however, the Commissioners were apparently anxious, in their post-war reconstruction and open competition arrangements,

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to ensure that such a thing could never happen at all. This could best be done by attaching less importance to academic ability, and more importance to personal qualities. The First Commissioner who retired in 1939 had, in the course of his evidence before the Tomlin Commission, expressed his personal view that the interview should, as in Foreign Service recruitment at that time, be a qualifying one that weeded out bad interviewees altogether.⁶⁵ (2) The Commissioners realized that their insistence on candidates taking an arduous examination in addition to their degree examination, together with the delay in offering posts, often led to candidates going into business or other professions though they might have preferred to enter the Civil Service.

Early in the 1940s a tentative scheme for normal post-war recruitment from outside the Service was therefore produced involving, for an experimental period of ten years, main recruitment by the old method with minor modifications, and up to 25% (from 25–50% since 1952) by Method II. In Method II the evidence of the candidate's academic ability was to be the award of at least 2nd class honours by a university; compulsory papers, including an English essay and general knowledge tests, were to be on the same lines as under the old arrangements; and the rest was to depend on interview (though the modern methods being used by War Office Selection Boards, which later, with suitable adaptation, became the basis of Method II, were not yet suggested in these early proposals). In the meantime, however, open reconstruction competitions had to be devised. A committee of the National Whitley Council recommended something very like the proposed Method II for this purpose. A 2nd class honours degree, or one year's full-time attendance at a university and an expectation by the university authorities that the standard would be reached, was to be accepted as proof of sufficient academic ability. A written examination in general subjects was to be designed to put on an equal footing people of very varying ages whose education had been interrupted by the war. An interview was to form the most important part of the competition; but the methods employed were to be left to the Commissioners to decide. When the regulations prepared by the Commissioners came into force in 1945, there were two important features in which they amplified earlier recommendations. First, the written examination in general

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subjects became a *qualifying* examination, with the dual purpose of weeding out unsuitable people at an early stage, and of providing subsequent interviewers with clues regarding the interests and abilities of those who were to be seriously considered as candidates. This qualifying examination comprised an English essay, tests in summarizing and interpreting difficult passages, current problems, arithmetic and an intelligence test. Secondly, the interview became a very extended one, in which the candidate was tested and observed both as an individual and as a member of a group.

As far as selection for the Administrative Class of the Home Civil Service was concerned, the introduction of this extended interview of a modern type, conducted by a newly-created Civil Service Selection Board (C.I.S.S.B.), represented an entirely new approach to the recruitment problem.⁶⁶ It is worth while to give some account of the methods and principles involved, for they underlie not merely the open reconstruction competition procedure, but also that adopted since 1948 in filling a proportion of the normal open competition vacancies, as well as all the vacancies filled by normal limited competition for promotion from other classes of the Service to the *junior* ranks of the Administrative Class. Although the use of these new procedures is still experimental, and is subject to review after 1957 in the light of the results of post-war follow-up surveys of those recruited by the old and the new methods, there seems every likelihood that they will be retained, and quite a possibility that they will ultimately be employed in recruiting a larger proportion of the Administrative Class than at present.

It was, of course, no accident that new selection procedures should have been applied to the recruitment of civil servants in the Administrative Class at this time. From 1942 onwards, War Office Selection Boards had been gaining practical experience in the selection of officers by new methods. These comprised intelligence and personality tests, interviews by psychiatrists, practical tests such as group discussions and lecturettes, command situations, obstacle courses and 'leaderless group' tests 'designed to bring out the candidates' initiative, co-operativeness, leadership and other social qualities'.⁶⁷ 'Officer quality' was analysed in terms of the main rôles that future officers would be called upon to play, and appropriate 'work-sample' situations were devised in the light of this job-analysis. Every effort was made to validate these tests by

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following up the candidates in their subsequent careers, but the extremely difficult conditions in which this had to be done meant that the results were not always reliable. Nevertheless, both laymen and specialists were broadly satisfied that the new procedures represented a very considerable improvement on the old-fashioned interview.

When the Civil Service Commissioners decided to set up a Civil Service Selection Board of similar type to the War Office Selection Boards, therefore, there was a considerable body of experience on which to draw. From the outset, however, there were certain important differences in the approach adopted. For one thing, psychiatrists were not employed, and the psychological staff consisted mainly of those with experience in the field of industrial psychology. For another thing, the group discussions and planning problems in which candidates had to take part seemed, to those with War Office procedure in mind, to have the object 'of throwing light more on the quality or calibre of the candidates' intellectual powers than on their social adjustments'.⁶⁸

The general programme of testing and assessing was as follows. The qualifying examination weeded out, in the reconstruction period, some 40% of the candidates. Except for the inclusion of cognitive tests, this qualifying examination was not unlike the one employed in the recruitment of Administrative Class personnel immediately after the 1914-18 war. On this occasion, however, the examination served the dual purpose of eliminating candidates not likely to be suitable, *and* providing guidance for those conducting the later tests. *Curricula vitae* were, as before, furnished by the applicants themselves. Referees' reports, five or six for each candidate, formed an important element in assessment; the referees were asked to provide answers to a series of fairly definite questions, and both the form in which these reports were provided and the use made of them represented a marked improvement on earlier practice. For those who survived the qualifying examination there was not merely one interview, as the arrangement had been after the 1914-18 war, but separate interviews with the Chairman, the Psychologist and the Observer, as well as the culmination of the whole programme, attendance before the Final Interview Board. In the first two of these cases the interviews were, we are told, 'of the orthodox systematic autobiographical variety'.⁶⁹

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It was in the remainder of the programme arranged by the Civil Service Selection Board for those who passed the qualifying examination that the real break with previous Civil Service recruitment policy lay, however. There were questionnaires on interests and leisure pursuits. Each candidate was asked to rank the members of the group with whom he was being tested, first as a civil servant, and secondly as a holiday companion. There were also projection and self-description tests (the latter comprising a self-description first from the point of view of a discerning critic and then from that of a discerning friend). Practical exercises were of two kinds, group discussions and short talks on the one hand, and analogous tests on the other. The analogous tests, which presented candidates with a range of concrete situations such as might be found in their future work, were about ten in number, some of them being on a group basis and some on an individual basis. In devising these exercises, the results of the first attempt to make a job-analysis of the work of a senior official in the Administrative Class were used. Since the intention was to select those who had the greatest promise of ultimately becoming successful Assistant Secretaries (and if possible rising even higher), the first stage in the job-analysis consisted in breaking down the work of an Assistant Secretary into three main categories—policy matters, paper work and personal contacts. Under each of these headings the kind of work to be done, and the qualities apparently required for its successful performance, were noted. Exercises were then designed on that basis. One group of such analogous tests required candidates to study a memorandum and appendices setting out the problems of an imaginary island; in the course of the subsequent exercises each candidate was observed in action both as a committee chairman and as an ordinary committee member.

To what extent have these selection procedures proved successful in the recruitment of higher civil servants? Some types of validation and follow-up have already been undertaken. The scores obtained by candidates in the different tests and their Final Selection Board markings have been compared with each other. They have also, for those who were recruited in the early period, been compared with their rating in reports on their progress over the first two years of their Civil Service life. On this basis, the general conclusion reached by Dr. P. E. Vernon (who, together

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with Sir Cyril Burt, has been advising the Commissioners on these new selection methods) is as follows. 'These investigations provide indubitable evidence of the value of psychologically planned procedures in the selection of high-grade personnel. The overall validity (corrected correlations of 0.5 to 0.6) may not appear high, but in view of the difficulty of getting a really reliable criterion, and of the alterations in accepted candidates as they progress in their profession, it is probably as good as it can be.'⁷⁰ It should be remembered, however, that the only follow-up results so far published relate to those who were still at a fairly early stage in learning their profession. There was, moreover, no 'control' with which to compare them, no body of people recruited by alternative methods whose progress could be plotted alongside their own. Until the first results of following up those selected by Method I and Method II are available in 1957, it will be impossible to say how successful the new methods of testing and assessing have proved to be, either individually or collectively.

In the meantime, and at the risk of seeming presumptuous, a few remarks may perhaps be made on some of the more general and less technical aspects of the matter. There are certain undisputed merits about the Method II procedure (regarded as a selection method for open reconstruction competitions, and for open or limited normal competitions). First, it represents a genuine attempt to match the people chosen with the type of work they will have to perform. Whether we agree or disagree with such details as have been published of the job-analysis and the analogous exercises based on it, it is clearly a step forward that the problem should have been approached in this way. Secondly, if an interview is to form part of the examination, it is obviously better to have an extended one of this type, in which the candidate is seen by numbers of people both individually and as a member of a group, rather than to let the issue depend (as it did before the war) on 15 minutes or so of observation by a board inadequately supplied with information on his interests and experience. Thirdly, the method has obvious merits in dealing with groups of candidates whose formal education has ended at very varying stages of their careers, or has been seriously interrupted by war or other circumstances.

Viewed as the normal procedure for selecting a certain propor-

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tion of those required to fill junior administrative posts in the Home Administrative Class, however, it appears to have certain dangers. First, there is the danger that those admitted in this way may be lower in their standard of academic attainment than their counterparts under Method I. Ever since the reforms of the 1870s it has been the intention of the Commissioners that the open competition should skim the intellectual cream of those competing. And whenever there were signs that this was not in fact happening, every effort was made to defeat the 'mere smatterers' by changing the marking procedure or limiting the number of papers that a candidate might take. Under Method II, however, the only *direct* indication of the academic standard of successful candidates (apart from the cognitive tests) is the award of at least 2nd class honours in some subject by some university. This must often represent a much lower standard of academic attainment than is in fact reached by successful Method I competitors. The 'dilutees' may, of course, make better administrators, as indeed some of the 'smatterers' may have done before steps were taken to exclude them. Nevertheless, success in the written part of the pre-1939 open competitions, as explained elsewhere in the present study, is correlated with career success after entry to the Service, and there is no evidence to suggest that those of roughly the same age recruited from outside on a different basis made better civil servants than their normal open competition colleagues. Method II, though admittedly experimental, represents a departure from the principle underlying normal open recruitment policy from its inception, without any apparent evidence to suggest that the principle had been unsatisfactory in its application.

A closely related issue is raised by the criticism, sometimes put forward by Method II candidates in private conversation, that the procedure tends to favour the slapdash and superficial at the expense of those who are more thorough. The general emphasis of Method II is on width of interests rather than depth of knowledge or understanding. Those who have been tested in this way seem to be in broad agreement regarding the type of candidate likely to succeed in the competition. He must be able to talk fluently on a variety of subjects, and with apparent first-hand knowledge of at least one. He must steer a middle course between bumptiousness and modesty. He must be able to argue his way out of a tight

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corner. He must be rapid rather than thoughtful. Life in a residential college is probably more likely to develop these qualities than attendance as a day student. Men from Oxford and Cambridge often find that they have been debating the subjects chosen for C.I.S.S.B. group discussion ever since they left school; though they privately regard many of these topics as hackneyed and stale, their practice in both formal and informal discussion enables them to marshal the relevant arguments with originality and skill. Are these qualities more necessary to the successful civil servant in the Administrative Class than the more solid virtues of scholarship expected of open competition candidates in the past (and still expected of those competing by Method I)? It is, of course, true that 'accurate', 'thorough', 'painstaking', or even 'scholarly' are not the adjectives likely to be used in recommending anyone for promotion to, or within, the Administrative Class. It is also true that the senior administrator need rarely attempt to master in all their complexity the problems with which he has to deal; he has experts to advise him on any matters requiring specialist knowledge, and subordinates to prepare everything for him in such a way that the precedents and courses of action available are clear, and he merely has to choose between them. The fact that he need no longer do so in the middle or later stages of his career, however, does not seem sufficient justification for requiring no real evidence of ability to master a subject when he is in his twenties.

Secondly, there is the danger that those with particular types of educational and social background may tend to fare better, in what is virtually an extended interview, than those from working-class or lower-middle-class homes who have gone to local authority primary and secondary schools and then to a 'Redbrick' university. In the absence of post-war published data on *unsuccessful* Method II candidates, it is impossible to say whether this suspicion has any statistical foundation or not.⁷¹ The Commissioners naturally deny that any such tendency exists, and make a number of points with some bearing on this issue. (a) They draw attention to the change in the educational background of successful C.I.S.S.B. candidates in the open reconstruction competitions compared with their 1939 open competition counterparts (only 26% of successful men came from Headmasters' Conference boarding-schools, compared

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with 44% in 1939). This difference, on the analogy of similar comparisons made elsewhere in the present study, is, however, almost certainly due to a change in the school history distribution of those *entering* for the competition at the two dates, and does not by itself suggest that the difference in method of selection had contributed towards the observed modification in the social pattern of the successful sample. (b) They 'detected no disposition on the part of C.I.S.S.B. to attach importance to middle class or upper class antecedents. The danger was of the opposite kind: if anything, there was a natural tendency when appraising a candidate's merits, to over-compensate for the handicap which often attaches to an upbringing in a poor home with limited opportunities.'⁷² This is reminiscent of Mrs. M. A. Hamilton's defence of the pre-war interview board, where 'most members . . . were apt, if anything, to prefer a Midland to an Oxford accent'.⁷³ With the best will in the world, those concerned must find it difficult to compensate, let alone over-compensate, a candidate for 20 years or so of unrepresented opportunities. (c) The argument is, however, shifted on to an entirely different plane when the Commissioners make a further point. 'In seeking entry upon a career in which personal effectiveness is of such importance, it may fairly be asked whether the candidate who cannot, from natural diffidence or reserve, do himself justice under the testing conditions that C.I.S.S.B. deliberately provides, deserves to succeed.'⁷⁴ In cases where this 'natural diffidence or reserve' arises from an unsatisfactory social or educational background, the argument could well take the following form. The successful senior administrator requires to have certain qualities in dealing with his fellow men both inside and outside the Service. The development of these qualities may well be fostered by the accident of having a certain type of home background, going to a certain type of school, and on from there to a certain type of university. If, therefore, the successful candidates are not a random sample of the whole universe of competitors in respect of their social and educational history, this may be because 'personal effectiveness' is, for reasons outside the control of the Commissioners, not uniformly distributed as between the different social strata. Nor can the C.I.S.S.B. assessors be expected to forecast the later development of this group of qualities; they must deal with the situation as they find it, and must

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work on the assumption that those who have a greater measure of personal effectiveness in their early twenties will make better civil servants in their forties than those with less.

Though such arguments have apparently never, in public discussion, been pushed to their logical conclusion, it would be possible to justify a certain measure of social bias in the Method II procedure on these grounds. Yet they do not always carry complete conviction. Take, for instance, the quality of being a good committee chairman. If we observe two candidates engaged in this activity, one of whom has had years of practice in it at school and at college, while the other has not, we must almost inevitably be influenced in our assessment by present performance. Yet, once he has had a chance to learn the ropes, the candidate who lacked the opportunity of gaining previous experience *may* prove to be a better committee chairman than his competitor.⁷⁵

Whatever its possible dangers—and it is still far too early to assess their true importance—Method II is obviously a vast improvement on the reconstruction competition arrangements following the 1914–18 war. The same cannot be said, unfortunately, of all the post-1945 competitions. Before normal methods had been fully restored, several other special post-war competitions were held for entry to the Administrative Class. In these cases the purpose was to recruit a limited number of older people to the grade of Principal. One of these competitions was restricted to candidates between certain age limits who had been European members of the Indian Civil, Indian Political, and Burma Civil Services; 42 Principals were appointed. The other two competitions drew from a wider field; in the first, 60 were appointed, and in the second (where the upper age limit was 50, instead of 45 as on the earlier occasion) 59 were appointed, though most of these were already temporary or permanent civil servants. In these last two cases a paper sifting of application forms resulted in the weeding-out of the great majority of the candidates (90% on the earlier occasion, and 86% on the later); only the remaining 10% or 14% were even given a preliminary interview, where a further reduction in numbers took place before they were seen by the Final Selection Board. Inevitably this drastic weeding-out in the first stage, on criteria which must have been somewhat arbitrary and difficult to apply, gave rise to the suspicion that only those already

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in the Service, and with the active support of their Departments, stood any chance of success; and the published figures of entrants by the later competition seemed to confirm this view. It is surely to be regretted that, in a case where the competitions were advertised as open to everyone between certain age-limits, the result should have been allowed to turn so largely on a preliminary sifting behind closed doors and on the basis of unstated criteria; the time and expense involved in devising means more in accordance with the high tradition of fairness in recruitment to the Administrative Class since the 1870s would have been amply repaid by the resulting public confidence. As it was, many thousands of people were left with the strong impression that justice had not been shown to be done.

We may turn now to the Final Interview Board, which forms the last stage of the normal open competitions (resumed in 1948) under both methods of recruitment.⁷⁶ Here the main differences from pre-war practice to which the Commissioners have drawn attention relate to the size and membership of the board, the length of the interview, and the addition (in the case of Method I) of a preliminary interview.⁷⁷ With regard to size, the board now consists usually of between seven and nine members, compared with five in pre-war days. This enlargement has been accompanied by changes in membership resulting in the representation of a wider range of interests. Before the war the First Commissioner, who acted as Chairman, was usually only supported by university and business representatives. Now the interest of the Service as user is represented by additional senior officials, active or retired, and an attempt is made to ensure that one representative of three other interests—the universities, business and industry, and the trade unions—is always present. The First Commissioner is still Chairman, and one member of the board is (as before) always a woman. Members representing the three non-Service interests are chosen on a rota basis from panels; every Vice-Chancellor and every Head of a College is invited to nominate a representative to sit on the university panel, which would appear to give universities organized on a collegiate basis a larger share of representation than other universities. With regard to time, the 15 or 20 minutes occupied by the pre-war interview, which it is now officially, if somewhat tardily, admitted 'did not permit the probing of . . .

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underlying qualities of character, intelligence or ability', has, in the post-war period, been replaced by 45 to 60 minutes as a rule. Moreover, the board now has the help of the C.I.S.S.B. report, in the case of Method II candidates, and of the pre-board interviewer's notes, in the case of Method I applicants; for in the latter case a member of the Final Board, or an experienced official, has already had a preliminary interview with the candidate, with the object of furnishing the Final Board with fuller information than is to be gleaned from the application form alone.

Despite these improvements, however, certain doubts remain. Will those who score well at such interviews tend to make better civil servants than their fellow competitors who score less well? The validation of the marks awarded at post-war interviews by reference to subsequent career success will eventually throw light on this problem. In the meantime, it is at least clear that an interview on the present lines *ought* to be more successful in achieving its purpose than the *viva voce* of the pre-war period. Can such interviews really secure complete equality of opportunity for candidates of widely-varying types of social and educational background? In the absence of detailed information about the whole field of candidates from which the choice was made, it is impossible to confirm or deny statistically whether post-war interview boards have shown any marked bias and, if so, what was the nature of that bias. It is true that we have reason to believe, as shown elsewhere in the present study, that in the first year or so of the resumed open competition, a significantly higher proportion of the successful than of the unsuccessful candidates came from boarding-schools. This, if true, would merely mean that the combined effect of written examination and interview had been to select a sample biased in this way, and we cannot assess, on the available information, the relative part played by the interview in this process. The official view is, quite naturally, that every chance is given to every type of candidate to show his qualities. In the main, there is no strong reason for doubting that this intention is fulfilled. There does seem to be a possibility, however, that *in a limited range of cases*, interviewees may, through the 'accident' of having had certain types of opportunity, or of possessing a certain range of interests, do themselves more than justice. And these advantages seem in some degree more likely to be possessed by candidates from the

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upper than from the lower social strata. One can only generalize from the impressions gained in the course of informal discussions with successful and unsuccessful candidates in recent competitions, but the following example may illustrate the type of case in which equality of treatment is difficult to secure.

There seems little doubt that, in pre-war days, candidates were generally asked if they had been abroad. Those who had to answer 'no', and for whom some other topic had therefore to be found, often came from families in relatively poor circumstances. Many of them received the impression, however, that this was regarded as a serious gap in their education, and that it might even be interpreted as showing an insularity of outlook and lack of interest in other countries. First-hand knowledge of another country and its problems, particularly if it is outside Europe, still seems to impress post-war interview boards more than any other single factor. The candidate whose parents happen to have lived abroad, or who has himself been stationed overseas, and who can talk intelligently about the current racial, constitutional and economic issues in the area concerned, is almost certain to have a highly successful interview. He feels, and inspires, confidence in much the same way as someone with original research to his credit tends to do at an academic interview. In the latter case, however, the confidence is more likely to be justified; in the former, the board may easily over-estimate the originality and grasp of affairs of such candidates, to the detriment of their competitors with no overseas connections or experience. Though the absence of comparable figures for *unsuccessful* candidates means that no yardstick is available, it is of interest to note that, amongst the open competition entrants of the four years 1949-52, as many as 12% had overseas connections by birth, school education, or country of father's employment. In four-fifths of these cases the connection was with a part of the world more remote than Europe.

There remains one other aspect of the open competition to be dealt with in the present chapter, and that is the problem of wastage. If a material proportion of those recruited to the Administrative Class leave the Service before they have completed a career of normal length, this may be symptomatic of a variety of ills. If the departures take place at an early career stage, it may

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mean that unsuitable people have been recruited, or that conditions of work for juniors are unsatisfactory. If there is a tendency to leave in the middle or later career stages, it may be due to one or more of several factors. First, promotion may have been unduly slow. Secondly, pay and conditions may not have kept pace with changes outside the Service. Thirdly, senior officials may, in the course of their duties, have come in contact with those who were able to make them attractive offers more in keeping with their ability and experience. Any of these three explanations, singly or in combination, clearly represent a criticism of Service policy, for losses of this kind are at best wasteful, and at worst irreparable. Is there any reason to believe that such losses have taken place on a substantial scale? Dale speaks of the ten or twelve senior men who had, to his own knowledge, left for outside employment in the twenty-five years before 1939. 'Ten or twelve may seem a small number of men to lose over twenty-five years: but it will not seem so small when we reflect that they were the *élite* of an *élite*. They would not have had the opportunity to go elsewhere, if they had not been men of great ability and strong character in the maturity of their powers, who had already attained or were obviously destined soon to attain the highest posts in the Service.'⁷⁸ In 1951 Sir Henry Wilson Smith left the Treasury to join Powell, Duffryn and Company, and Sir John Woods resigned as Permanent Secretary of the Board of Trade to go to the English Electric Company. Both were far from the normal retiring age, and their departure was widely discussed. The *Manchester Guardian*, in a leading article entitled 'Exodus from Whitehall', suggested that these resignations were a warning that 'some of the superhuman load of administrative responsibility must soon be taken off human shoulders' if the Welfare State was to be saved from disaster. 'Half a dozen more cases of this kind would seriously affect the quality of the national administration. What makes these men who have risen to honour and influence in the public service change over to business positions? They will, of course, earn much more money. From slightly more than £2,000 a year after tax they can probably rise to twice that much, with many personal amenities in addition. The change means nowadays a rise from one distinct class into another. But more important to the trained civil servant must be the chance of relief from incessant, tormenting overwork.'⁷⁹

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In view of the widespread interest in the problem of wastage, it may seem surprising that estimates of its nature and extent have not been published. The reason for this is that reliable information is almost unobtainable. The Tomlin Commission called for the relevant figures, but the usefulness of the forthcoming table was extremely limited. The table was prepared from returns made by only 14 Departments, from which there had been 21 Administrative Class resignations in the 10-year period 1st April 1920 to 31st March 1930. The character of the outside appointments obtained by these officials cannot be distinguished from the hundred other cases included, which related to other classes of the Service.⁸⁰ In 1945 the First Division Association endeavoured to discover what resignations from the Service in recent years were known to their members. The replies, though not sufficiently complete to justify detailed analysis, were made available for the present study. Neither the Association, the Treasury, or the Establishment Officers of individual Departments, have the necessary material in their possession to give an adequate account of Administrative Class wastage over a reasonable period of time.

In order to fill this gap, it was decided to find out what had happened to all those who entered by open, or post-war reconstruction, competitions of the 31-year period 1909 to 1939, taking 1950 as the final date. The enquiry had to be limited to competition entrants, for the reason that although the *numbers* of entrants of certain other types in particular years are published, it is not possible to identify them as individuals. The object of the enquiry was to discover what proportion of those entering had subsequently left, what type of work they had taken up, and at what age they resigned. Their reasons for leaving could, in a very broad sense, be inferred from the career stage at which they resigned and the kind of post to which they went. Those to whom the enquiry related numbered 876, of whom 597 were still in the Service as established administrators in 1950. The problem, therefore, was to trace the remaining 279 people.

From published information their surnames and initials, last schools attended, universities, Departments and dates of disappearance from the *Imperial Calendar* could be ascertained. Help in discovering what had happened to these people was sought, in the first instance, from the First Division Association, Establishment

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Officers of the individual Departments, and headmasters of schools. In many cases, this proved successful; where it did not, bursars of colleges, and colleagues in the Department at the time, were contacted. In the end, after all available sources had been tapped, there were only five instances where, though it was known that resignation and not death or retirement was involved, the type of work subsequently taken up could not be discovered. The whole process was very laborious, but it became clear at an early stage that only by combining all these lines of enquiry could reasonably complete figures be obtained.

Table 8 divides the 876 cases into the same four groups as are used in other sections of the present study, according to the dates of the entrance competitions. The 'missing' cases are classified in five categories. First, those who died whilst still established civil servants, including those who were killed in the two world wars; 80 were accounted for in this way. Secondly, there were those who retired not more than two years before they would have been expected to do so; there were 47 such cases of 'normal' retirement. Thirdly, there were 23 men who retired at an earlier age, on grounds of ill-health. Fourthly, there were 15 women who married and left the Service. There was, of course, a marriage-bar until 1946, effectively preventing women who married from retaining their posts. We do not know in what proportion of these 15 cases the women would have chosen to remain in the Service if they had been allowed to, though it is known that some of them would have done so. Fifthly, there remained 113 men and one woman to whom none of the above statements applied, who had given up their posts for other reasons. The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to an analysis of these 114 cases.

Table 9 shows the distribution of these cases according to length of service before leaving. One interesting point that emerges is that, in the normal open competitions of 1909-39, between 4% and 6% of the entrants left before they had completed ten years' service. The lack of variation between the different competition groups in this respect is very striking; even the reconstruction competitions of 1919-20 only experienced a 9% loss by leaving before the first ten years, though the unsettling effects of war service might have been expected to increase the proportion even more. We do not know how many of those who resigned did

TABLE 8

**SUBSEQUENT HISTORY (UP TO 1950) OF ENTRANTS TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE CLASS OR ITS EQUIVALENT
BY THE OPEN AND POST-1918 RECONSTRUCTION COMPETITIONS OF 1909 TO 1939 (INCLUSIVE)**

<i>Subsequent History, up to 1950</i>	<i>Competitions of 1909-14</i>	<i>Competitions of 1919-20</i>	<i>Competitions of 1921, 1925-32</i>	<i>Competitions of 1933-39</i>	<i>Total (Competitions of 1909-39)</i>
(1) Still in the Service, 1950, as established administrators	62	129	137 (7)	269 (11)	597 (18)
(2) Died while in the Service	43	18	2	17	80
(3) Retired not earlier than two years before normal retiring age	43	4	—	—	47
(4) Retired at an earlier age on grounds of health	9	9	3	2	23
(5) Left on marriage (women)	No women admitted		1 (1)	14 (14)	15 (15)
(6) Left for reasons other than those given above	29	37	17	31 (1)	114 (1)
Total Entrants	186	197	160 (8)	333 (26)	876 (34)

Notes: (1) For the purposes of this Table, an 'entrant' is someone who *actually took up duties* in a Home Civil Service Department other than the Public Record Office or one of the Museums. The totals therefore sometimes differ slightly from those given in the *Annual Reports of the Civil Service Commissioners*. (2) The number of women included in each total is shown in brackets. (3) In this and subsequent Tables the category 'Competitions of 1919-20' includes *all* post-1918 reconstruction competitions, some of which were not completed within the period stated.

TABLE 9

LENGTH OF SERVICE OF OPEN COMPETITION ENTRANTS OF THE PERIOD 1909-39 WHO RESIGNED BEFORE
1950 FOR REASONS OTHER THAN ILL-HEALTH, NORMAL RETIREMENT OR MARRIAGE

	<i>1909-14 Competitions</i>	<i>1919-20 Competitions</i>	<i>1921, 1925-32 Competitions</i>	<i>1933-9 Competitions</i>	<i>All these Competitions</i>
Left after less than 10 years' service	8 (1)	18 (0)	9 (1)	17 (6)	52 (8)
Left after 10 but less than 20 years' service	7 (3)	6 (3)	6 (2)	14* (6)	33 (14)
Left after 20 but less than 30 years' service	6 (1)	13 (11)	2* (1)	Not applicable	21 (13)
Left after 30 years' service, but more than 2 years before retiring age	8 (4)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	8 (4)
Total of such resignations	29 (9)	37 (14)	17 (4)	31 (12)	114 (39)
Total entry by these competitions	186	197	160	333	876

* Figures incomplete because post-1950 resignations not included.

Note: The numbers in brackets are those—included in the adjacent figures—who left to take up approved employment (e.g. as Governors-General, in the Foreign Service, other Civil Services, public service corporations, etc.).

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so because they were dissatisfied with the Service, or were virtually asked to resign because, after a probationary period, the Service was dissatisfied with them. It is sufficient for our purposes to know that between 4% and 6% of those selected were clearly not suited to life in the junior grades of the Administrative Class and gave up the attempt within their first ten years. One would expect fewer people to leave during the following ten years, for several reasons. For one thing, most of the obvious misfits should have been eliminated by then. For another, the chances of starting an alternative career would be poorer. And the loss of pension rights involved in leaving at this later stage would be greater. On the whole, the results shown in Table 9 are in line with these expectations, though the differences in two out of the four cases are too small to be significant. Another relevant factor of which account should be taken in these and later comparisons is that of 'approved employment'. Where someone left in order to take up duties in the Foreign Service, in a public service corporation, as a Governor-General, or in related fields, some arrangement for the transfer of pension rights was usually made. In Table 9 the figures in brackets indicate the number of cases of this type included in the totals, and it can be seen that an increasing proportion of those who left at a later career stage, took up employment of this type.

Table 10, after making a broad distinction between early leavers (defined as those less than 33 years old at departure) and late leavers (the remainder), shows in detail the field of work entered by those who resigned. It is of interest to notice two or three cases where, after leaving comparatively early, men returned to temporary administrative posts in the Service. As many as a quarter of the early leavers who entered by the competitions of 1933-9 went to the Foreign Service, which none of their counterparts from earlier competitions had done. Otherwise, those who left before they were 33 seem to have gone into similar occupations at the different periods involved. Teaching, both university and other, has been the most usual choice, followed by journalism.⁸¹

Amongst the late leavers, the tendency to enter 'approved employment' so as not to sacrifice pension rights can be observed. In any event, the Higher Civil Service is an obvious source for the experienced administrators required on the boards of nationalized undertakings, in the United Nations Organization

TABLE 10

TYPE OF OCCUPATION TAKEN UP BY OPEN COMPETITION ENTRANTS OF THE PERIOD 1909-39 WHO RESIGNED BEFORE 1950 (FOR REASONS OTHER THAN ILL-HEALTH, NORMAL RETIREMENT OR MARRIAGE)

	Early Leavers (less than 33 years of age)				Late Leavers (33 years of age and over)				Total (all Ages, all Competitions)
	1909-14 Competitions	1919-20 Competitions	1921, 1925-32 Competitions	1933-9 Competitions	1909-14 Competitions	1919-20 Competitions	1921, 1925-32 Competitions	1933-9 Competitions	
Governors-General, etc.					1	7			8
Foreign Service				5		2	1	2	10
Other Civil Services	1				2	1		1	5
Scientific Civil Service				2		1			3
Public Service Corporations			1		4	1	1	1	8
U.N.O., O.E.E.C., and other international organizations					1	2	1	1	5
Bank Directorships and senior financial posts	1			1	2	1			5
Business (Directors, Owners, Partners)		1		1	3	2	1	1	9
Business (Others)					1		1	1	3
Secretaries of educational, research, political and professional organizations		2	1		4	2	1		10
University teaching and administration	2	1		3	1		1	2	10
Other teaching	1	2	2	1				2	8
Journalism		3	2	2	1	1			9
Law	1	1						1	3
Medicine			1	1					2
Church		3	1	1					5
Librarianship					1				1
Left, then returned as 'temporaries'			1	2			1		4
Retired on Inheritance					1				1
Unknown		4			1				5
Total	6	17	9	19	23	20	8	12	114

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and as Governors-General. In the period covered, business is shown to have drawn away a smaller number of senior men than these public employments. Administrative work as secretaries of voluntary organizations has been as popular a choice as teaching and lecturing. In the case of the late leavers, comparisons between those entering by the different competition groups are difficult, because some of those who entered from 1919 onwards might still decide to leave after 1950.

Was the slowness of their promotion a major factor in bringing about these resignations? When their cases were examined, it was found that there was no significant difference between the ages reached by 'leavers' before being promoted to the rank of Principal *and* of Assistant Secretary, and the ages reached by their counterparts in the various competition groups. Those who left seem, as a sample, to have been neither more nor less successful in obtaining such promotion than their colleagues who remained in the Service.

Finally, with regard to the fifteen women who resigned on marriage, it was found that all but one of them had had less than eight years' service. If we were to include them, the proportion of entrants by the competitions of 1933-9 who left before ten years would be increased from 5% to 9%.

CHAPTER FIVE

OTHER ROUTES OF ENTRY TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE CLASS

SOME four-fifths of the Higher Civil Service in 1950 had either been promoted from the ranks or had entered by open competition. The remaining routes of entry, numerically of minor importance, can be grouped into three categories. First, direct entry from outside otherwise than by open competition; secondly, transfer from professional and technical branches of the Service; and thirdly, transfer from other Services.

(1) DIRECT ENTRY, BUT NOT BY OPEN COMPETITION

The appointment of outsiders to administrative posts otherwise than by open competition had been a common practice before the introduction of new methods of recruitment in the 1870s, and was not entirely abandoned after then. The process of bringing the main Departments within the scope of the new arrangements was a gradual one, and even when the bulk of the junior administrative vacancies in a Government Office were filled by successful Class 1 examination entrants, there was always scope for appointing a few outsiders to these or to more senior posts. For example, Ministers might select their private secretaries either from inside or outside the Service, and the advancement of those who entered by this particular route was notoriously rapid. Thus in answer to a Parliamentary Question in August 1890, information was furnished regarding Civil Service appointments (not all of them administrative in character) subsequently obtained by those who had been private secretaries to Ministers since 1869.¹ There were

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twelve cases of men already belonging to the permanent Civil Service who became private secretaries to Ministers; the next jobs they held involved an average increase in salary of some 40%. There were nine cases of men whose method of entry (or re-entry) to the Service was by this route; and in this group of instances their average rise in salary resulting from the next appointments they obtained was 146%. Of these nine people, three entered the Service as private secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and three as private secretary to the President of the Local Government Board. At the time of the MacDonnell Commission the good fortune in promotion which attended private secretaries was still being remarked upon.² Nevertheless, the number of people who were appointed to administrative posts as direct entrants and who had not succeeded in the open competition was, except in one or two Departments, relatively small. Taking eleven of the main Departments in 1911 (Trade, Treasury, Colonies, Local Government, War, Customs and Excise, Inland Revenue, Admiralty, Works, Post Office, Home Office), with a Higher Division and senior administrative staff of some 435 between them, not more than a dozen of these had entered by this route.³ The two main Departments making no use of the Class 1 examination at this time were Education, and Agriculture and Fisheries. The administrative staff of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries were all either promoted, transferred from the inspectorate, or chosen by a special examination for Assistants to Heads of Departments.⁴ Much more important in terms of numbers, however, was the other case. In the Board of Education, junior administrators were known as Assistant Examiners, and were brought within the scope of Section IV of the Superannuation Act of 1859, which meant that the posts were treated as being of a technical or specialist nature and could be filled on what was virtually a patronage basis.

As there were some 95 posts in the Board of Education that could reasonably be regarded as primarily administrative in character, it was natural that the MacDonnell Commission should devote considerable attention to the existence of such a wide breach in the structure of open competition. The arguments of those who defended the Board's policy were ingenious but unconvincing. It was claimed that great advantages were obtained by appointing older men (the age limits were 23-35). Those recruited

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in this way were of a rather more adventurous turn of mind, they were not the kind of people who wanted a safe and quiet career at an early age. They were men who, in addition to possessing high academic qualifications (often involving post-graduate work), had knocked about the world or tried some other profession such as the Bar, or teaching, or municipal service.⁵ The critics contended that those brought in by this means were more likely to be misfits who, having failed in one profession, pulled what wires they could and found their way into the higher ranks of the Civil Service by a back door. The Board's own figures showed, moreover, that nearly half of those recruited were under 26.⁶ Sir Robert Morant seemed to have chosen fellow Wykehamists to fill many of the senior posts, administrative and other. When it was pointed out that five senior posts⁷ had recently been held by Winchester and New College men, the only excuse that could be offered was that 'their numbers were a curious coincidence, because they came in in such very different ways'.⁸ The Board's case for recruiting junior administrators in a different way from other Departments was not accepted; and after 1919 both the description and the filling of these posts was brought into line with standard practice. The MacDonnell Commission noticed political patronage in certain recently created offices. The Welsh Insurance Commission was apparently largely composed of Lloyd George's nominees, and this seems also to have been true of the key posts in the Scottish equivalent.⁹ To avoid abuses of this and similar types in the future, the Majority Report recommended that when any appointment was made to a high administrative post in the Civil Service of someone who had not already served for a prescribed number of years, 'the Minister appointing shall be required to lay, as soon as possible, before Parliament a Minute stating the name, qualifications and previous career of the person'.¹⁰ This proposal has not been carried out, but after 1920 it was provided that the Civil Service Commissioners should publish details of such special cases in the *London Gazette*. According to the Commission's own figures, there were only eleven 'nominations' to Administrative Class posts in the fourteen years 1925-38 inclusive, a ratio of about one nomination to every 39 competition appointments.¹¹

The relative infrequency of the practice is borne out by an examination of the routes of entry of those comprising the Higher

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Civil Service in 1929, 1939 and 1950. At the two earlier dates, less than 15% had been direct entrants of this type. If we classify the 1939 cases according to Departments and dates of admission, we find that the Board of Education, with its pre-1919 practice of appointing Assistant Examiners, accounts for more than a third of them. The Board of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Board of Trade each contribute about 9% of the cases; the remainder are spread fairly evenly over fifteen other Departments, and there is no very marked concentration around particular dates. An analysis of the 27 corresponding cases, forming less than 3% of the 1950 Higher Civil Service, produces similar results. By this date most of those who had entered as Assistant Examiners in the Board of Education had retired; this Department, the Treasury, the War Office and the Air Ministry were responsible for three cases each, the remaining instances being spread over thirteen other Departments. In terms of the proportion of the Higher Civil Service recruited in this way, this particular route of entry has evidently been relatively unimportant for some time past. It is worth noticing, however, that a significantly greater proportion of those in the very highest ranks of the Service in 1939 were direct entrants of this type.

So far we have been speaking of non-examination direct-entry cases where admission to the Civil Service took place before 1939. The suspension of normal recruitment arrangements during the 1939-45 war led, as we have seen, to a marked increase of promotion from the ranks. It also led to the recruitment of large numbers of temporary civil servants, some 118 of whom had, by 1950, been given permanent appointments in the Higher Civil Service, of which they formed about 11%. The temporary posts originally held by these wartime entrants were not always administrative in name or in character; for this reason some of these cases figure in Treasury statistics as having been promoted or transferred from other classes of the Service. From our point of view, however, the important point seems to be that they were all taken on as temporary wartime civil servants and subsequently established as members of the Administrative Class; they had not been recruited to the lower ranks, or the professional branches, of the Service in the ways described elsewhere in the present study, but had been hastily taken on, often by individual Departments without reference

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to the Civil Service Commission. The work they were initially given to do depended more on the exigencies of the moment than on their qualifications or experience, and it was often only later on that it became possible to match the duties of the posts to which they were transferred with their particular capacities.

About half these wartime entrants were concentrated in three or four Departments (Trade, Food, Treasury and Cabinet Office), where they formed between 15% and 20% of the 1950 higher administrative staff (see Table 11). Six more Departments (Supply, Education, Fuel and Power, Admiralty, Transport, Labour) accounted for 30% of the total between them; the remainder were dispersed over the rest of the Service. An analysis of the type of work they had been doing before they were taken on as temporary civil servants produces some interesting results. The largest single category was university teaching and administration, in which 21% of them had been engaged. A further 14% had been teachers of other kinds, so that more than a third were attached to the teaching profession. Economic and social research work of some kind was given as their occupation by 11% of the wartime entrants, while 9% had been in business in some not very clearly stated capacity. Journalism accounted for 8% of the cases, and the law for 7%. Some 4% had been bank clerks, and about the same proportion had been secretaries of organizations of various kinds. The remaining cases were spread over various kinds of clerical, statistical or social work.

How did the wartime entrants differ from their colleagues in the Higher Civil Service in their educational and social background? About the same proportion had been to boarding-schools as in the case of open competition entrants, but a significantly higher proportion had been to secondary or other schools administered by the local education authority. A fifth of them had not been to a university. Of those who had been to one, a significantly lower proportion had been to either Oxford or Cambridge than was the case with their open competition colleagues. Father's occupation was only obtained for the senior members of the Higher Civil Service, amongst whom there were only 17 wartime entrants; a lower proportion of this small number of cases was found to lie in the Registrar-General's first two social classes than the open competition entrants' proportion.

TABLE II

DEPARTMENTAL DISTRIBUTION OF WARTIME ENTRANTS, 1950

Departments	Above Assistant Secretary			Assistant Secretary			Assistant Secretary and Above		
	Number	Percentage of staff of those ranks	Percentage of all wartime entrants of those ranks	Number	Percentage of staff of that rank	Percentage of all wartime entrants of that rank	Number	Percentage of staff of those ranks	Percentage of all wartime entrants of those ranks
Trade	1	3.8	5.9	22	29.7	21.6	23	23.0	19.5
Food	7	46.7	41.2	13	54.2	12.7	20	51.3	16.9
Treasury and Cabinet Office	4	11.1	23.5	14	29.2	13.7	18	21.4	15.3
Supply	1	5.9	5.9	9	20.9	8.9	10	16.7	8.5
Education	2	18.2	11.7	6	28.6	5.9	8	25.0	6.8
Fuel and Power	1	7.7	5.9	6	19.4	5.9	7	15.9	5.9
Admiralty	—	—	—	4	16.7	3.9	4	11.8	3.4
Transport	—	—	—	4	16.0	3.9	4	10.8	3.4
Labour	—	—	—	4	8.5	3.9	4	6.6	3.4
Other	1	0.6	5.9	19	5.1	19.6	20	3.6	16.9
All	17	5.1	100.0	101	14.2	100.0	118	11.3	100.0

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Apart from the special case of the wartime entrants, the non-examination direct entrants form, as we have seen, a relatively insignificant proportion of the 1950 Higher Civil Service. Four-fifths of them have had a university education, and the types of school and university they have attended are very much the same as those of their open competition colleagues. What is the future of this method of entry likely to be? At the time of the MacDonnell Commission, Graham Wallas suggested that the Service would benefit if more people with experience of the outside world were recruited.¹² More recently, such a policy has been advocated by Ernest Barker. In his view, the increase of state functions, whereby the 'regulator' has also become the 'doctor' and the 'maximizer of social utility', calls for a review of recruitment methods. The Service needs not only those who have just graduated but also, by selection up to the age of 30 or so, post-graduate people who have had a period of actual social or public work which has enriched and completed their training.¹³ Despite the attractions of such a proposal, there are several reasons for believing that it is most unlikely to be adopted. First, the unfortunate precedent of the appointment of Assistant Examiners in the Board of Education makes any suggestion of the kind open to attack on the ground that, in the past, it has led to jobbery, favouritism and inefficiency. Secondly, the much more recent case of the wartime entrants, though widely regarded (particularly from outside) as having enriched the Service, has naturally been viewed by many open competition entrants and promotees as an unfair and undesirable form of dilution, not to be countenanced except under the stress of war. Thirdly, and perhaps most important of all, while each of the other main routes of entry has its organized support in the sense that any lessening of its importance would be opposed by powerful interests (the associations representing the lower ranks and the professional groups ensuring the maintenance of avenues of promotion and transfer, the Civil Service Commission and the Treasury defending the fabric of open competition), there is not, and can hardly be, a pressure group to protect or enlarge the opportunities of potential 'back-door' entrants. This being so, it looks as though direct entry otherwise than by open competition will be even more exceptional in the future than it has been in the past. Isolated cases may occur in which someone with a distin-

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guished career in, say, one of the Armed Services is given a senior civilian post in a Service Department, but anything in the nature of a deliberate policy for the recruitment as administrators of outsiders with experience in other fields would be opposed by too many powerful interests to have any chance of acceptance. For if there is one matter on which the great majority of members of the Administrative Class are agreed, it is that the tradition of recruiting amateurs with no specialist knowledge or outside experience, who will learn the art of administration by practice within the Service, must be maintained; and, with four-fifths of the Higher Civil Service either promoted from the ranks or having entered by open competition, who would expect it to be otherwise?

(2) TRANSFER FROM THE PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL BRANCHES OF THE SERVICE

The basis on which this route of entry is distinguished from the others lies in the fact that, on first joining the Civil Service, the people concerned had to show that they possessed some professional, scientific or technical knowledge or experience; this was one of the factors tested in the written examination or interview on the basis of which they were normally recruited to a specialist branch of the Service. In this respect there is a clear line of separation between them and their Service colleagues who were originally taken on to perform messenger, clerical, executive or administrative duties, and in whose case no specific professional, scientific or technical knowledge was needed as a condition of appointment. These colleagues might later, in the course of their duties or by private or organized study, acquire specialized knowledge or experience of some kind, in the hope of advancement or for other reasons; even in those cases they are, however, more suitably regarded as in the direct line of promotion to the apex of the administrative triangle. The people with whom we are concerned in the present section obtained their first Civil Service posts in branches from which subsequent entry to the Administrative Class is to be regarded as transfer rather than promotion, though the latter term was, and is, frequently used by the Treasury and the Civil Service Commission to describe such movement.

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Although isolated cases of administrators who originally joined the Service as specialists can be found at all periods, the practice of transferring specialists to purely administrative work has never been a common one. Certain Departments, however, had what almost amounted to a tradition in this respect. At the time of the MacDonnell Commission the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, for example, reported that administrative staff were always recruited by promotion, transfer, or special examination in subjects some of which were of use in the Department's work;¹⁴ and twenty years later it was still a matter of promotion of clerical, professional or technical officers.¹⁵ Other Departments employing large numbers of specialists seemed equally determined, however, that *none* of them should ever be admitted to the Secretariat. An outstanding instance of the second attitude was the Post Office. In 1930 it was publicly admitted that, though there was nothing to prevent a technical officer from being transferred to the administrative side, such a thing had never in fact happened. Two arguments were advanced by the Department to justify this extraordinary state of affairs.¹⁶ First, that by the time an engineer of outstanding capacity had demonstrated exceptional ability for administration and organization, he would necessarily possess fairly long service and would probably have shown marked technical ability also. 'His technical experience and training would be sacrificed on transfer, while his success as an administrator would be problematical, and it would very rarely be the case that the man's value to the Service would be enhanced.' The second justification of Post Office policy in this regard was even more revealing. 'If the administrative staff were recruited in part from technicians, a body of quasi-experts would grow up in the Secretariat who would tend to press their views on technical matters, possibly in opposition to those of the technical departments.' The case for the administrator with a smattering of knowledge on many subjects but no real grasp of any has perhaps never been more baldly stated. The specialist could never be anything but biased, and could never be trusted to refrain from grinding his own particular axe at the expense of questions of high policy and finance. Even the Tomlin Commissioners were unimpressed. 'In view of the functions of the Post Office, we should have expected that, over a period of years, some technical officers would have

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been found to possess qualities rendering desirable their transfer to the administrative side.¹⁷ It was recommended that a special committee be appointed to enquire into the organization of the Post Office; and the Bridgeman Committee in due course stated that, in their view, there should be no bar to a technical officer holding an administrative post if he had shown himself to possess administrative ability.¹⁸ Since then the Post Office has found it possible to transfer suitable technical officers to administrative work, apparently without disastrous effects.

Between these two extremes, most Departments followed a policy of occasional transfer. The Admiralty, for instance, reported that every technical officer had the opportunity of impressing himself so strongly on those in authority that he could rise, if fit, to the highest posts.¹⁹ In the Board of Trade there was the special case of the Assistant Examiners in the Patent Office. They came in between 20 and 25 by a special examination. About half of them were university men, and of these a reasonable proportion had 'firsts'. They were usually either graduates, students of technical colleges which did not grant degrees, or engineering students who had obtained associateships of one of the engineering societies. In the period 1903-8 the number of Assistant Examiners recruited was out of all proportion to the higher technical posts to which they could aspire, and some found their way on to the administrative side.²⁰ On the general question of access to the highest administrative posts, the Tomlin Commission 'were informed that two of the present permanent Heads of Departments began their careers on the specialist side of the Service, and we received no evidence indicating that, when an appointment to the permanent Headship of a Department is under consideration, regard is not and will not be had to the claims of officers other than those serving in an administrative capacity. But we regard it as inevitable that most high administrative posts should continue to be filled by officers with administrative rather than specialist experience.'²¹

Our figures for the Higher Civil Service in 1929, 1939 and 1950 show that, at all three dates, specialists formed less than 10% of the total. Though there are only 56 such cases in the 1950 group, it is of some interest to examine their types of previous Service experience, and the Departments in which they were first given their administrative opportunity. Three Departments stand out in

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this connection, the Board of Trade (where 16% of them were given their first administrative post), the Ministry of Education (13%) and, by its change of policy since the Bridgeman Committee, the Post Office (11%). Apart from Agriculture, Health and the Air Ministry, no other Department has accounted for more than 5% of the total. The commonest type of previous Service experience has been as H.M. Inspector of Schools (27% of the cases), in engineering (20%), in law (13%), as Examiners in the Patent Office, or economists and financial experts in various Departments (9% in each case). The rest of the total is made up by smaller numbers of agricultural specialists, chemists, geologists, and others holding miscellaneous specialist appointments.

These transferees, together with the small number of men transferred from other Services, differed in certain respects from their open competition colleagues. A significantly higher proportion of them had been to secondary schools administered by the local education authority. A quarter of them had not been to a university. Of those who had been to one, only about half had been to Oxford or Cambridge, as against four-fifths of the open competition entrants.

What is the likelihood that, in the future, transfers of this kind will be more frequent? At least one recent writer has advocated this. 'That such transfer can invigorate the Administrative Class is obvious enough, and if the practice (still rare) becomes more frequent, much would automatically be done to encourage the specialist to know his art, and also not to be too narrow about it.'²² It might have been expected that, with the enormous increase in the specialist branches of the Service, more of those originally recruited because of their professional, scientific or technical knowledge or experience would have been found to possess administrative capacity of a high order. Yet this has not hitherto been reflected in any increase in the proportion of higher civil servants with specialist Service experience, the tendency having been in the opposite direction. There seems to be a deep-seated prejudice against specialists, exemplified in an extreme form by the Post Office argument quoted earlier. Ideally, there ought to be a two-way traffic between the administrative and specialist branches of the Service, but in practice it seems highly improbable that the flow will ever become more than a trickle. The figures

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given in Table 4 suggest that, in respect of access to the three lowest ranks of the administrative hierarchy, only about 6% of the new recruits have been transferees during the last four or five years. Short of a war or similar upheaval, this proportion is unlikely to be improved upon.

(3) TRANSFER FROM OTHER SERVICES

The other form of transfer is even less important as a source of recruits for the Higher Civil Service.²³ In the three years 1929, 1939 and 1950 not more than 3% of our cases are of this type. Classification of the 13 in 1950 by Service origin shows four Indian Civil Service cases, three from the Foreign, Diplomatic and Consular Services, two from Northern Ireland, and the rest from the Egyptian and Colonial Services. These men had held administrative posts in these Services; many of them had, in their twenties, taken roughly the same competitive examination as their home counterparts. For various reasons they had, usually since 1939, been transferred to home administrative posts. It might have been expected that many more ex-members of the Indian Civil Service would, after the transfer of power, have been absorbed into the Home Administrative Class. Most of those who were so absorbed, however, were either appointed on a temporary basis, or had so recently been made Principals as a result of a special post-war competition that they did not yet figure in the Higher Civil Service by 1950. Apart from this special case, there is no reason to suppose that a significant proportion of higher civil servants in the future will be transferees from other Services.

CHAPTER SIX

THE SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES OF HIGHER CIVIL SERVANTS

IN their published lists of successful candidates in open competitions for entry to the Administrative Class before 1939 and since 1949, the Civil Service Commissioners gave the name of the last school attended. For those who formed part of the Higher Civil Service in 1950, but had entered by a different route, the Commission supplied similar information from their files; and this was also done for those above the rank of Assistant Secretary in 1939 and 1929. Before proceeding to explain how this material was classified and analysed, it is important to indicate its limitations and possibilities.

It must be remembered that the information at our disposal is limited to the fact of attendance at a named school for an unspecified period of time. In particular cases we may know whether the pupil concerned was on a day or a boarding basis, whether fees were paid or expenses were covered by a scholarship or free place; but as we do not have such knowledge in all instances our analysis has to proceed without it. Despite these limitations, however, there are certain inferences that can be drawn with reasonable safety from the material in its existing form. It might, for example, be wrong to suppose that all those who are classified as having been at an expensive boarding-school were in fact boarders and on a fee-paying basis; but it would not be wrong to think of them as having spent the latter part of their schooldays in such an environment. If a few of them were local day boys, or the talented sons of poor parents, the bulk of their fellows were not, and the pattern of school life will have been primarily influenced by the characteristics of the majority. The analysis of data relating

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to the occupations of the fathers of higher civil servants has, moreover, made it possible to show which particular combinations of school types are most closely associated with particular types of social origin of the children.

It was decided to adopt two classifications of schools for the purpose of the present study. Certain schools had been singled out for enquiry by the Clarendon Commission (1861-4), and this 'was significant of the position that a few schools had gained in the public eye'.¹ These nine leading schools—Eton, Winchester, Westminster, Charterhouse, St. Paul's, Merchant Taylors', Harrow, Rugby and Shrewsbury—are separately distinguished in the analysis that follows, as well as being identified as a group described as 'Clarendon Schools'. The second classification had to cover all schools, and was adapted to serve certain broad purposes.

(1) It was important, in grouping the categories, to be able to distinguish predominantly boarding-schools (other than preparatory schools) from predominantly day schools, and to distinguish the more expensive boarding-schools from the less expensive ones.

(2) Some grouping was desired that would make it possible to separate secondary schools administered by a local education authority from other secondary day schools; and to distinguish, amongst the latter, those in membership of the Headmasters' Conference. This Conference was originally created for promoting discussion of educational questions affecting schools of a certain type. Membership was limited to schools where a sufficient proportion of boys afterwards went to a university, and where both the school and the headmaster had a satisfactory measure of freedom. In a few cases the standing of the school or the headmaster was held to justify admission even when the normal conditions were not fulfilled. The usefulness of separately distinguishing day schools in membership of the Headmasters' Conference lies partly in the fact that such membership was popularly believed to confer 'public school' status, though no such claim was ever put forward by the Conference itself.² Moreover, the analysis of our 'father's occupation' material for the senior members of the 1950 Higher Civil Service shows a marked association between having been at such a school (when grouped with boarding-schools as a whole) and having had a father in the upper social strata.³ (3) It was important to have a separate class for those (other than preparatory

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school or private tuition cases) whose education had not proceeded as far as the secondary stage.

To meet these conditions, boys' schools were divided into eight categories, according to the position obtaining in 1939; and the schools of the comparatively small number of girls appearing in the enquiry were classified on as nearly similar a basis as possible. To fit people whose schooling may have ended as early as the 1880s or as late as the 1930s into the pattern of school types existing shortly before the passing of the 1944 Education Act, inevitably involves some elements of distortion. The relative expensiveness of the leading boarding-schools varied over time, as did the list of schools in membership of the Headmasters' Conference; and in the early part of the period there were, of course, no English secondary schools administered by local education authorities at all. A fluctuating standard would, however, have involved distortions of its own, besides being extremely difficult to apply. In interpreting the figures, the reader should bear in mind that the classification used is a 1939 one; these are the categories into which their 'last school attended' would have fitted, had the people concerned been completing their schooling just before the outbreak of the last war.

The first three categories comprise predominantly boarding secondary schools, where more than half the pupils were, at that date, boarders. Schools of the first two types charged £140 a year or more at that time for board and tuition, schools of the third type charged less than this (including, of course, boarding-schools where no charge was made at all). The distinction between the first and second categories is one of general public esteem. The first category comprises twenty of the best-known boarding-schools—Charterhouse, Cheltenham, Clifton, Eton, Fettes, Haileybury, Harrow, Loretto, Malvern, Marlborough, Oundle, Radley, Repton, Rossall, Rugby, Sedbergh, Sherborne, Shrewsbury, Uppingham and Winchester.⁴ The second consists of all other secondary schools at which board and tuition cost £140 a year or more in 1939; some of these are, of course, almost as well-known as those in category one.

Types four, five, six and seven are predominantly day schools. Those in the fourth category were, at that date, in membership of the Headmasters' Conference; those in the fifth and sixth were not. The fifth comprises other secondary schools not administered by a

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local education authority; the sixth comprises other secondary schools administered by a local education authority. Category seven consists of schools (other than preparatory schools) where pupils did not proceed as far as the secondary stage. Finally, there had to be a residual eighth category for the very small number of cases of unclassifiable schools (mostly abroad), of private tuition, and of finishing one's formal education at a preparatory school. In grouping predominantly boarding-schools for comparison with day schools, this very small eighth class is treated as coming within the day school category.

In applying these two systems of grouping (the Clarendon and eight-category classifications), we may begin by examining the extent to which open competition entrants to the Administrative Class at different periods of time had been at Clarendon schools (see Table 12).

An analysis of such entrants shows that something less than a fifth of them had usually come from such schools in the inter-war period. In the six years before 1914 the proportion had been more than a quarter. The most recent figures available show that, comparing the four years 1949-52 with the seven years before 1939, a further highly significant change has taken place; only about one in twelve open competition entrants now comes from a Clarendon school. (The admission of women to the open competition since the 1920s has only played a very minor part in bringing down the Clarendon proportion.) Individually, Winchester had, through most of the period before 1939, made the largest contribution, with Rugby and Eton not far behind. In the four years since 1949, however, while Eton's share of the competition intake has been slightly reduced, Winchester's has fallen substantially and Rugby no longer appears. Turning to the Higher Civil Service in 1950, 1939 and 1929, we find that in 1950 and 1939 about a fifth of those who had reached there by the open competition route came from Clarendon schools; the corresponding proportion in the 1929 group was over a quarter (see Table 13). Amongst the most senior members of the 1939 and 1929 groups (the Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries) the proportion of Clarendon school men in the open competition entrants was as high as a third; and the percentage of such men amongst *other* types of entrant of this rank was similar. When the 1950 group of higher civil servants is considered as a

TABLE 12

CLARENDON SCHOOLS ATTENDED BY OPEN COMPETITION ENTRANTS TO JUNIOR ADMINISTRATIVE POSTS IN
HOME DEPARTMENTS, 1909-39 AND 1949-52

Period	St. Paul's	Merchant Taylors'	Eton	Winchester	West- minster	Shrewsbury	Harrow	Charter- house	Rugby	All Clarendon Schools
I. 1909-14	No. % 7 3.8	No. % 5 2.7	No. % 8 4.3	No. % 15 8.1	No. % 5 2.7	No. % 1 0.5	No. % 1 0.5	No. % — —	No. % 8 4.3	No. % 50 26.9
II. 1919-20	No. % 7 3.6	No. % 3 1.5	No. % 4 2.0	No. % 7 3.6	No. % 5 2.5	No. % — —	No. % 1 0.5	No. % — —	No. % 9 4.6	No. % 36 18.3
III. 1921, 1925-32	No. % 2 1.3	No. % 2 1.3	No. % 6 3.8	No. % 6 3.8	No. % 3 1.9	No. % — —	No. % 1 0.6	No. % — —	No. % 4 2.5	No. % 24 15.0
IV. 1933-9	No. % 8 2.4	No. % 2 0.6	No. % 9 2.7	No. % 11 3.3	No. % 6 1.8	No. % 1 0.3	No. % 5 1.5	No. % 10 3.0	No. % 10 3.0	No. % 62 18.6
Whole Period, 1909-39	No. % 24 2.7	No. % 12 1.4	No. % 27 3.1	No. % 39 4.5	No. % 19 2.2	No. % 2 0.2	No. % 8 0.9	No. % 10 1.1	No. % 31 3.5	No. % 172 19.6
1949-52:										
Method I	No. % 2 1.3	No. % 2 1.3	No. % 3 2.0	No. % 2 1.3	No. % — —	No. % 1 0.7	No. % 1 0.7	No. % 1 0.7	No. % — —	No. % 12 7.9
Method II	No. % 2 2.8	No. % 2 2.8	No. % 2 2.8	No. % 1 1.4	No. % — —	No. % — —	No. % — —	No. % — —	No. % — —	No. % 7 9.9
Both Methods	No. % 4 1.8	No. % 4 1.8	No. % 5 2.2	No. % 3 1.3	No. % — —	No. % 1 0.4	No. % 1 0.4	No. % 1 0.4	No. % — —	No. % 19 8.5

Notes: (1) In this Table the percentage of all open competition entrants to Home Departments is given. In Table 13 the percentage of all those of the stated rank and method of entry is shown. (2) In this and later Tables the 1909-39 data relate to those who actually took up duties, while the 1949-52 data relate to those appointed from the competitions of those four years.

TABLE 13

CLARENDON SCHOOLS ATTENDED BY THOSE OF THE RANK OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY AND ABOVE, 1929, 1939, 1950

	St. Paul's		Merchant Taylors'		Eton		Winchester		Westminster		Shrewsbury		Harrow		Charterhouse		Rugby		All Clarendon Schools		All Schools	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
P.A.S. and above																						
1929	Open Competition	5	7.0	6	8.5	4	5.6	1	1.4	1	1.4	1	1.4	—	—	1	1.4	3	4.2	22	31.0	71
	Other	—	—	—	—	2	4.0	5	10.0	1	2.0	1	2.0	1	2.0	—	—	2	4.0	12	24.0	50
	All	5	4.1	6	4.9	6	4.9	6	4.9	2	1.6	2	1.6	1	1.0	1	1.0	5	4.1	34	28.1	121
1939	Open Competition	4	3.5	6	5.3	5	4.4	7	6.2	2	1.8	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	1.8	26	23.0	113
	Other	2	3.0	1	1.5	1	1.5	—	—	1	1.5	1	1.5	—	—	2	3.0	1	1.5	9	13.6	66
	All	6	3.3	7	3.9	6	3.3	7	3.9	3	1.7	1	0.5	—	—	2	1.1	3	1.7	35	19.5	179
1950	Open Competition	6	2.8	2	0.9	6	2.8	7	3.3	7	3.3	—	—	—	—	1	0.5	7	3.3	38	18.1	210
	Other	—	—	2	1.6	1	0.8	1	0.8	3	2.4	—	—	2	0.9	—	—	2	1.6	10	8.2	122
	All	6	1.8	4	1.2	7	2.1	8	2.4	10	3.0	—	—	3	0.9	1	0.3	9	2.7	48	14.4	332
A.S.																						
1929	Open Competition	8	8.3	1	1.0	4	4.2	3	3.1	2	2.1	—	—	—	—	1	1.0	3	3.1	22	22.9	96
	Other	2	2.5	1	1.3	2	2.5	1	1.3	2	2.5	—	—	—	—	2	2.5	1	1.3	11	13.9	79
	All	10	5.7	2	1.1	6	3.4	4	2.3	4	2.3	—	—	—	—	3	1.7	4	2.3	33	18.9	175
1939	Open Competition	6	3.7	2	1.2	3	1.9	4	2.5	2	1.2	1	0.6	1	0.6	—	—	8	5.0	27	16.8	161
	Other	2	1.5	4	3.0	4	3.0	2	1.5	1	0.8	1	0.8	1	0.8	—	—	1	0.8	16	12.0	133
	All	8	2.7	6	2.0	7	2.3	6	2.0	3	1.0	2	0.7	2	0.7	—	—	9	3.1	43	14.6	294
1950	Open Competition	5	2.0	4	1.6	4	1.6	10	4.1	1	0.4	2	0.8	3	1.2	3	1.2	10	4.1	42	17.1	246
	Other	2	0.4	2	0.4	3	0.6	6	1.3	1	0.2	1	0.2	3	0.6	2	0.4	3	0.6	23	4.9	467
	All	7	1.0	6	0.8	7	1.0	16	2.2	2	0.3	3	0.4	6	0.8	5	0.7	13	1.8	65	9.1	713
A.S. and above																						
1929	Open Competition	13	7.8	7	4.2	8	4.8	4	2.4	3	1.8	1	0.6	—	—	2	1.2	6	3.6	44	26.3	167
	Other	2	1.6	1	0.8	4	3.1	6	4.7	3	2.3	1	0.8	1	0.8	2	1.6	3	2.3	23	17.8	129
	All	15	5.1	12	4.1	12	4.1	10	3.4	6	2.0	2	0.7	1	0.3	4	1.4	9	3.0	67	22.6	296
1939	Open Competition	10	3.6	8	2.9	8	2.9	11	4.0	4	1.5	1	0.4	1	0.4	—	—	10	3.6	53	19.3	274
	Other	4	2.0	5	2.5	5	2.5	2	1.0	2	1.0	2	1.0	1	0.5	2	1.0	2	1.0	25	12.6	199
	All	14	3.0	13	2.7	13	2.7	13	2.7	6	1.3	3	0.6	2	0.4	2	0.4	12	2.5	78	16.5	473
1950	Open Competition	11	2.4	6	1.3	10	2.2	17	3.7	8	1.8	2	0.4	5	1.1	4	0.9	17	3.7	80	17.5	456
	Other	2	0.3	4	0.7	4	0.7	7	1.2	4	0.7	1	0.2	4	0.7	2	0.3	5	0.8	33	5.6	589
	All	13	1.2	10	1.0	14	1.3	24	2.3	12	1.1	3	0.3	9	0.8	6	0.6	22	2.1	113	10.8	1045

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whole, the Clarendon proportion drops from the 17% or 18% found amongst open competition entrants to less than 11%; this is, of course, largely due to the fact that so few of those promoted from the ranks had been to Clarendon schools. The importance of the individual schools is correspondingly diminished when the whole of the 1950 group is examined. It is surprising to find that little more than 2% of higher civil servants are Wykehamists, and that Rugbeians form a similar proportion, with Etonians nearer 1%. The widely-held belief that these schools individually make a much larger contribution than this to this profession has probably gained currency partly by generalizing from the limited number of cases where data are provided in *Who's Who* biographies, and partly by concentrating attention on the Foreign and Diplomatic Service. Even in 1929, it may be noted, Eton, Winchester and Rugby only contributed 3% or 4% apiece to the Higher Civil Service as a whole. This may well have been very much more than their share, measured, say, by the proportion of all secondary school boys who were educated at these particular schools. When we remember, however, that considerably more than half the members of this profession were at that time recruited by an examination in which most of the successful candidates were Oxford or Cambridge men, the proportion of higher civil servants coming from the Clarendon schools collectively or individually might easily have been expected to be still greater.

Leaving this first classification of schools and turning to the second type of grouping (based on the eight categories already described) we find that less than a quarter of the higher civil servants of 1950 had been to boarding-schools; a further quarter had been to Headmasters' Conference day schools, and another quarter to secondary day schools administered by local education authorities (see Table 14). These proportions turn out to be very different, however, when the group is broken down into sections according to route of entry to the Administrative Class. It then appears that more than a third of the open competition entrants, and nearly half of the other pre-war direct entrants, came from boarding-schools. Amongst promotees, on the other hand, the boarding-school proportion was only 3% or 4%. As would be expected, the differences are less marked when the proportions attending Headmasters' Conference day schools are compared.

TABLE 14

TYPE OF SCHOOL LAST ATTENDED BY HIGHER CIVIL SERVANTS OF THE 1950 GROUP WHO ENTERED THE ADMINISTRATIVE CLASS BY VARIOUS ROUTES

Route of entry to the Administrative Class	Category 1		Category 2		Category 3		Category 4		Category 5		Category 6		Category 7		Category 8		All
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
(1) Open competition (including post-1918 reconstruction)	111	24.3	26	5.7	25	5.5	160	35.1	54	11.8	74	16.2	0	0	6	1.3	456
(2) Other forms of direct entry from outside—1939 and before	9	33.3	4	14.8	0	0	6	22.2	3	11.1	4	14.8	0	0	1	3.7	27
(3) Other forms of direct entry from outside—since 1939 (wartime entrants)	23	19.5	6	5.1	8	6.8	20	16.9	14	11.9	37	31.3	5	4.2	5	4.2	118
(4) Transfer from other branches and services	11	15.9	4	5.8	3	4.3	13	18.8	14	20.3	19	27.5	2	2.9	3	4.3	69
(5) Promotion from the ranks	4	1.1	3	0.8	6	1.6	60	16.0	100	26.7	128	34.1	73	19.5	1	0.3	375
All Routes	158	15.1	43	4.1	42	4.0	259	24.8	185	17.7	262	25.1	80	7.6	16	1.5	1045

KEY TO CLASSIFICATION OF SCHOOLS

The system adopted is fully explained on pages 119-21. The following is a brief summary.

Categories 1-3, predominantly boarding secondary schools.

(1) Twenty of the best-known, where board and tuition cost £140 a year or more in 1939.

(2) Others where board and tuition cost £140 a year or more in 1939.

(3) Those where board and tuition cost less than £140 a year in 1939.

Categories 4-6, predominantly day secondary schools.

(4) Those in membership of the Headmasters' Conference in 1939.

(5) Other secondary day schools, not administered by a local education authority.

(6) Other secondary day schools, administered by a local education authority.

Categories 7-8, residual.

(7) Schools (other than preparatory schools) where pupils did not proceed as far as the secondary stage.

(8) Unclassifiable schools (mostly abroad), private tuition, cases where the last formal education was at a preparatory school.

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Then, although there is still a contrast between open competition entrants (a third) and promotees (a fifth), no significant difference is found between wartime direct entrants, transferees and those promoted from the ranks. The same is broadly true when secondary schools administered by a local education authority form the basis of comparison. Finishing one's schooling before reaching the secondary stage was virtually unknown amongst open competition entrants and pre-war direct entrants of other types. It was rare amongst wartime entrants and transferees, but nearly one-fifth of those promoted from the ranks were in that category.

The senior members of the Higher Civil Service in 1939 and 1929 show the schools distribution that would be expected in view of the relatively low proportion of promotees amongst them (16% in 1939, 12% in 1929). In each case more than a third had been to boarding-schools, and about the same proportion to Headmasters' Conference day schools (see Table 15). Three-fifths or more of these senior members of the groups were open competition entrants. It is therefore not surprising to find that the pattern of school types is broadly similar amongst new recruits to the Administrative Class who were successful in the examinations of 1909-14, and the years immediately following 1918 (see Table 17). It remained roughly the same in the later periods 1925-32 and 1933-9, and this is again reflected in the proportion of open competition entrants in the 1950 Higher Civil Service who had been to the various types of school.

When we turn to the four most recent years for which figures are available, however, a rather different picture emerges. There are two differences between the school category distribution of open competition entrants since 1949 and before 1939. First, the proportion of those whose last secondary school was a day school administered by the local education authority has increased from 19% to 26%, but this difference is not quite large enough to be statistically significant. Secondly, the proportion of those who had been at boarding-schools has shown a significant decline (38% to 30%). Moreover, this is accompanied by a significant change in relative importance in the different types of boarding-school. Categories 1 and 2, comprising the best-known and most expensive boarding-schools, now account for only 18% instead of 31% of the total; while the cheaper boarding-schools (including those such as

TABLE 15

TYPE OF SCHOOL LAST ATTENDED BY THOSE ABOVE THE RANK OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY, 1929, 1939, 1950

	Category 1 School	Category 2 School	Category 3 School	Category 4 School	Category 5 School	Category 6 School	Category 7 School	Category 8 School	Total
	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No.
<i>S. and D.S.</i>									
1929 { Open Competition	8 30.8	1 3.8	2 7.7	13 50.0	1 3.8	1 3.8	—	—	26
Other	7 41.2	1 5.9	—	—	2 11.8	6 35.3	1 5.9	—	17
All	15 34.9	2 4.7	2 4.7	13 30.2	3 7.0	7 16.3	1 2.3	—	43
1939 { Open Competition	8 22.9	3 8.6	1 2.9	18 51.4	1 2.9	4 11.4	—	—	35
Other	6 31.6	1 5.3	—	4 21.1	1 5.3	6 31.6	1 5.3	—	19
All	14 25.9	4 7.4	1 1.9	22 40.7	2 3.7	10 18.5	1 1.9	—	54
1950 { Open Competition	16 22.5	3 4.2	6 8.5	24 33.8	10 14.1	11 15.5	—	1 1.4	71
Other	4 16.0	1 4.0	2 8.0	6 24.0	6 24.0	6 24.0	—	—	25
All	20 20.8	4 4.2	8 8.3	30 31.3	16 16.7	17 17.7	—	1 1.0	96
<i>All above A.S.</i>									
1929 { Open Competition	18 25.4	1 1.4	5 7.0	37 52.1	5 7.0	4 5.6	—	1 1.4	71
Other	14 28.0	2 4.0	3 6.0	8 16.0	6 12.0	13 26.0	2 4.0	2 4.0	50
All	32 26.4	3 2.5	8 6.6	45 37.2	11 9.1	17 14.0	2 1.7	3 2.5	121
1939 { Open Competition	30 26.5	9 8.0	5 4.4	48 42.5	10 8.8	11 9.7	—	—	113
Other	12 18.2	4 6.1	3 4.5	14 21.2	13 19.7	17 25.8	3 4.5	—	66
All	42 23.5	13 7.3	8 4.5	62 34.6	23 12.8	28 15.6	3 1.7	—	179
1950 { Open Competition	50 23.8	13 6.2	14 6.7	77 36.7	25 11.9	30 14.3	—	1 0.5	210
Other	12 9.8	2 1.6	5 4.1	24 19.7	36 29.5	36 29.5	5 4.1	2 1.6	122
All	62 18.7	15 4.5	19 5.7	101 30.4	61 18.4	66 19.9	5 1.5	3 0.9	332

For key to school types, see Table 14.

TABLE 16

TYPE OF SCHOOL LAST ATTENDED BY THOSE OF THE RANK OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY AND ABOVE, 1950

	Category 1 School	Category 2 School	Category 3 School	Category 4 School	Category 5 School	Category 6 School	Category 7 School	Category 8 School	All Schools
<i>S. and D.S.</i>	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No.
Open Competition	16 22.5	3 4.2	6 8.5	24 33.8	10 14.1	11 15.5	—	1 1.4	71
Other	4 16.0	1 4.0	2 8.0	6 24.0	6 24.0	6 24.0	—	—	25
All	20 20.8	4 4.2	8 8.3	30 31.3	16 16.7	17 17.7	—	1 1.0	96
<i>U.S. and P.A.S.</i>									
Open Competition	34 24.4	10 7.2	8 5.8	53 38.1	15 10.8	19 13.7	—	—	139
Other	8 8.2	1 1.0	3 3.1	18 18.5	30 30.9	30 30.9	5 5.2	2 2.1	97
All	42 17.8	11 4.7	11 4.7	71 30.1	45 19.1	49 20.8	5 2.1	2 0.8	236
<i>A.S.</i>									
Open Competition	61 24.8	13 5.3	11 4.5	83 33.7	29 11.8	44 17.9	—	5 2.0	246
Other	35 7.5	15 3.2	12 2.6	75 16.1	95 20.3	152 32.5	75 16.1	8 1.7	467
All	96 13.5	28 3.9	23 3.2	158 22.2	124 17.4	196 27.5	75 10.5	13 1.8	713
<i>All of the rank of A.S. and above</i>									
Open Competition	111 24.3	26 5.7	25 5.5	160 35.1	54 11.8	74 16.2	—	6 1.3	456
Other	47 8.0	17 2.9	17 2.9	99 16.8	131 22.2	188 31.9	80 13.6	10 1.7	589
All	158 15.1	43 4.1	42 4.0	259 24.8	185 17.7	262 25.1	80 7.6	16 1.5	1045

For key to school types, see Table 14.

TABLE 17

TYPE OF SCHOOL LAST ATTENDED BY OPEN COMPETITION ENTRANTS TO JUNIOR ADMINISTRATIVE POSTS
IN HOME DEPARTMENTS, 1909-39 AND 1949-52

Period	Category 1		Category 2		Category 3		Category 4		Category 5		Category 6		Category 7		Category 8		Total
	School	%	School	%	School	%	School	%	School	%	School*	%	School	%	School	%	
I. 1909-14	52	28.0	17	9.1	9	4.8	71	38.2	17	9.1	11	5.9	—	—	9	4.8	186
II. 1919-20	57	28.9	12	6.1	11	5.6	58	29.4	21	10.7	28	14.2	—	—	10	5.1	197
III. 1921, 1925-32	38	23.8	11	6.9	7	4.4	53	33.1	14	8.8	32	20.0	—	—	5	3.1	160
IV. 1933-9	84	25.2	21	6.3	22	6.6	104	31.2	38	11.4	63	18.9	—	—	1	0.3	333
Whole period 1909-39	231	26.4	61	7.0	49	5.6	286	32.6	90	10.3	134	15.3	—	—	25	2.9	876
1949-52:																	
Method I	15	9.9	9	5.9	16	10.5	37	24.3	28	18.4	44	28.9	—	—	3	2.0	152
Method II	9	12.7	7	9.9	10	14.1	22	31.0	10	14.1	13	18.3	—	—	—	—	71
Both Methods	24	10.8	16	7.2	26	11.7	59	26.5	38	17.0	57	25.6	—	—	3	1.3	223

For key to school types, see Table 14.

* The schools concerned were not necessarily administered by local education authorities in the periods specified, but were so administered in 1939.

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Christ's Hospital where no fees at all are charged) have increased their share. It is still too early to judge whether the school background of open competition entrants under the traditional arrangements (Method I) and by the new selection plan (Method II) will differ materially from each other. There would seem to be a tendency for Method II entrants to resemble the pre-war pattern in their schools, and for Method I entrants to differ; but the absolute numbers involved in these differences are as yet too small to be statistically significant.

It is of some interest to compare the success of candidates from individual schools both inside and outside the Clarendon group in open competitions at different periods. In the six years 1909-14, Winchester had the largest number of successful candidates, and was followed at some distance by Eton and Rugby. Of the first eleven schools at this time, six were Clarendon schools (the remaining three being St. Paul's, Westminster and Merchant Taylors'); the others were Dulwich College, Clifton College, Marlborough, and Manchester Grammar School and King's School, Canterbury. In the reconstruction competitions after the 1914-18 war Rugby headed the list. There were now only four Clarendon schools in the first eleven (the remaining three being Winchester, St. Paul's and Westminster); this time the other schools were Marlborough and Manchester Grammar School as before, but instead of Dulwich College, Clifton College and King's School, Canterbury, there were Malvern, Rossall, Christ's Hospital, Tonbridge and Haileybury. Eton came 12th. In the inter-war period Manchester Grammar School moved to the top, closely followed by Winchester. The first eleven once again included six Clarendon schools, but Charterhouse had replaced Merchant Taylors'. Marlborough and Christ's Hospital again appeared, accompanied for the first time by Wellington and Cheltenham. Finally, in the four years 1949-52, Christ's Hospital had the greatest number of successes, closely followed by Eton. Four Clarendon schools appeared in the first twelve. Of the eight non-Clarendon schools, only three (Manchester Grammar and Clifton College besides Christ's Hospital) had appeared as high on the list before. The remaining five were Bancroft's, George Heriot's, King's College Wimbledon, St. Olave's and St. Saviour's, and the City of London School.

So far, in discussing the schools of those who competed for entry

to the Administrative Class, our attention has been confined to those who succeeded in the open competition and subsequently accepted junior administrative posts in the Home Civil Service. A limited amount of information exists about the *unsuccessful* competitors, and consequently about the general field of candidates. How far do significant differences emerge in the analysis of such data? Suitable published material is only available for one year, 1948.⁵ The published information for 1939 is unsatisfactory in two respects. First, the unsuccessful candidates to whom the figures relate include a large number of people who were not competing for entry to the Home Administrative Class, but for the Indian and the Burma Civil Services. Secondly, and partly as a result of this, these figures also include a substantial number of people educated overseas, whose schools cannot usefully or readily be fitted into any of the accepted British categories (e.g. L.E.A. administered and other, boarding and day).⁶ Fortunately, however, it was possible to make a detailed analysis of the field of candidates for one pre-war year, 1938, by examining unpublished Civil Service Commission data. By this means we can not only compare the schools of successful and unsuccessful candidates with each other at these two dates (1938 and 1948), but we can also see what change in the school background of candidates as a whole has taken place over the ten-year period.

The picture that emerges is a very interesting one. If the 1938 examination was typical of pre-war open competitions, then those who succeeded (in the sense of securing a mark high enough to be offered a post at some time during the months that followed) differed significantly in the type of school they had last attended from those who failed (see Table 18). For though 45% of the successes had been to boarding-schools, this was only true of 31% of the failures. Ten years later the same tendency, for a larger proportion of successes to have been to boarding-schools than was the case amongst failures, could still be observed (see Table 19). The 1948 sample of successful candidates was, however, too small for this difference to be statistically significant. By adding the 1949 entrants to the 1948 successful candidates and comparing the school distribution of this larger group with the 1948 unsuccessful candidates (on the assumption that the latter would be representative of 1949 as well), the difference in the school background of the

TABLE 18

TYPE OF SCHOOL LAST ATTENDED BY SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES IN THE 1938 OPEN COMPETITION FOR JUNIOR ADMINISTRATIVE POSTS IN THE HOME CIVIL SERVICE

	Category 1 School		Category 2 School		Category 3 School		Category 4 and 5 School		Category 6 School		Category 8 School		All Schools	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Successful candidates	16	21.0	8	10.5	10	13.2	26	34.2	16	21.0	—	—	76	
Unsuccessful candidates	37	14.4	26	10.1	16	6.2	83	32.3	83	32.3	12	4.7	257	
All candidates	53	15.9	34	10.2	26	7.8	109	32.7	99	29.7	12	3.6	333	

Notes: (1) For key to school types, see Table 14. (2) A 'successful' candidate is, for the purpose of the present Table, one whose place in the order of marks qualified him for the offer of a post at some time before the *next* competition; not all such candidates accepted these offers.

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post-war successes and failures became significant. On this basis, men and women who had been at boarding-schools formed 25% of those selected, but only 15% of those rejected.

Clearly, however, a major change had taken place in this ten-year period in the type of secondary school from which the general

TABLE 19

TYPE OF SCHOOL LAST ATTENDED BY SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES IN THE 1948 OPEN COMPETITION (METHOD I AND METHOD II) FOR JUNIOR ADMINISTRATIVE POSTS IN THE HOME CIVIL SERVICE

	<i>Boarding-Schools</i>		<i>Day Schools</i>		<i>All Schools (Excluding overseas)</i>
	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Successful candidates	11	22.0	39	78.0	50
Unsuccessful candidates	38	14.8	218	85.2	256
All candidates (excluding those educated overseas)	49	16.0	257	84.0	306

Note: This Table merely reproduces figures given in the 84th Report of the Civil Service Commissioners. The criteria used may differ slightly from those adopted in classifying the 1938 data in Table 18 in two respects, the definition of a successful candidate and of a boarding-school. Overseas schools, and the candidates who attended them, are excluded (this makes a difference of only 1 in the successful total and 4 in the unsuccessful total).

field of candidates was drawn; instead of a third of them, as in 1938, only 16% now came from boarding-schools. We have already seen that open competition entrants in recent years differ significantly from their pre-war counterparts in their school background. This could have been because the new examination arrangements were selecting a different type of sample from the same kind of universe. Our study of the unsuccessful as well as the successful candidates in these two years suggests, however, that this was not what was happening. Methods I and II were, in effect, selecting a sample differing from the residual in broadly the same school category respects as had obtained under pre-war arrangements. The school characteristics of the universe had changed, and this was merely reflected in the sample. Of those who competed, the boarding-school products were still materially more successful than their day-school counterparts; but as so few of them now took

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part in the competition, they formed a correspondingly smaller proportion of those selected.

The classification of universities is on a much simpler basis than that of schools, but before proceeding to explain the method adopted there are one or two preliminary points to be made. Our main purpose was to be able to separate those who had been to a university *before* joining the Civil Service from those who had not, and to know the proportions in which those in the Higher Administrative Class were recruited from different groups of universities. Full information was not available in all cases regarding such matters as the class, type and principal subject of the degree taken, or the number of years spent at the university, and although some of the missing particulars could have been found by an extensive search of published data, the use that could be made of such information once it was obtained hardly seemed to justify the time involved in finding it. The significance of a 'first', for instance, may vary according to the university, the subject or the date, and there is no firm basis on which such comparisons can be made. Moreover, for those who came into the Administrative Class by open competition, the marks for the written part of that examination, despite certain defects, probably provide a more reliable index of relative academic ability. Again, the subject groups in which honours can be taken vary so much from one university to another that classification on a subject basis can only be done in terms so broad as to be of little value. As in the case of the last school attended, it was not known in all instances whether students had received financial help in the form of bursaries, scholarships and exhibitions; no general conclusions regarding parents' economic status can therefore be drawn from this material.

In classifying universities, Oxford and Cambridge were treated individually. In order to be able to distinguish those cases where, after first being at another university, a further period was spent at either Oxford or Cambridge, two more categories were defined.⁷ Both London and Edinburgh were separately distinguished; the bulk of the civil servants coming within the scope of this enquiry are normally stationed in one or other of these two capitals, and it was therefore of interest to discover how many of them came from either of these universities. The two remaining categories covered all Scottish universities except Edinburgh, and all other

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universities elsewhere in Britain or abroad. If, however, in any instance there was a subsequent period at Oxford or Cambridge, the case was treated as coming into that special group, and was *not* classified according to the first university.

In the 1950 group of higher civil servants taken as a whole, nearly 37% had never been to a university before joining the Service (see Table 20). This is significantly higher than the corresponding proportion for the senior members of the group (24%). The difference is of the same order as that between the proportion of promotees in the two cases, where the corresponding percentages are 36 and 23½. To a very large extent, of course, it was those promoted from the ranks who lacked a university education. In the 1950 group as a whole, over 88% of them were in this category (see Table 21). Amongst transferees the proportion was about 26%. Less than one-fifth of non-examination direct entrants (war-time and earlier) had no university, and amongst open competition entrants the proportion was less than 2%.

As would be expected, the proportion of non-university men amongst the senior members of the 1939 and 1929 groups showed only a slight variation from the 1950 position (18% or 19% compared with 24%).⁸ At these earlier dates as well, there were only very small percentages of open competition entrants in this position, and the same holds good of new recruits coming into the Service by this route over the whole period 1909-39 (see Table 23).

Those who had been to either Oxford or Cambridge, alone or in conjunction with another university, formed over 47% of the 1950 Higher Civil Service; all other universities combined only contributed a further 16%, of which London, the Scottish universities and the remaining non-Scottish universities accounted for roughly a third each. Amongst open competition entrants in the 1950 group, the Oxford and Cambridge proportion was over 82%, leaving only 16% for all other universities combined. The disproportion between Oxford and Cambridge and the remaining universities was not much less amongst pre-war direct entrants without examination (70% compared with 11%). It was, however, substantially less in the case of wartime entrants (48% against 32%), and transferees (39% against 35%); whilst it was reversed amongst promotees (4% against 7%), though the small number of cases makes this last comparison unreliable.

TABLE 20

UNIVERSITIES ATTENDED BEFORE JOINING THE CIVIL SERVICE BY THOSE OF THE RANK OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY AND ABOVE, 1950

	Oxford		Oxford and another		Cambridge and another		London		Edinburgh		Any other Scottish		Any other except Scottish		None		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
<i>S. and D.S.</i>																	
Open Competition	30	42.3	2	2.8	1	1.4	5	7.0	5	7.0	2	2.8	2	2.8	4	5.6	71
Other	4	16.0	2	8.0	—	—	1	4.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	15	60.0	25
All	34	35.4	4	4.2	1	1.0	6	6.3	5	5.2	2	2.1	2	2.1	19	19.8	96
<i>U.S. and P.A.S.</i>																	
Open Competition	61	43.9	6	4.3	6	4.3	6	4.3	4	2.9	6	4.3	6	4.3	2	1.4	139
Other	11	11.3	4	4.1	1	1.0	8	8.2	4	4.1	2	2.1	3	3.1	58	59.8	97
All	72	30.5	10	4.2	7	3.0	14	5.9	8	3.4	8	3.4	9	3.8	60	25.4	236
<i>A.S.</i>																	
Open Competition	97	39.4	8	3.3	5	2.0	11	4.5	9	3.7	8	3.3	9	3.7	2	0.8	246
Other	46	9.9	6	1.3	9	1.9	27	5.8	8	1.7	11	2.4	29	6.2	304	65.1	467
All	143	20.1	14	2.0	14	2.0	38	5.3	17	2.4	19	2.7	38	5.3	306	42.9	713
<i>All of the rank of A.S. and above</i>																	
Open Competition	188	41.2	16	3.5	12	2.6	22	4.8	18	3.9	16	3.5	17	3.7	8	1.7	456
Other	61	10.3	12	2.0	10	1.7	36	6.1	12	2.0	13	2.2	32	5.4	377	64.0	589
All	249	23.8	28	2.7	22	2.1	58	5.5	30	2.9	29	2.8	49	4.7	385	36.8	1045

TABLE 21

UNIVERSITIES ATTENDED BEFORE JOINING THE SERVICE BY HIGHER CIVIL SERVANTS OF THE 1950 GROUP WHO ENTERED THE ADMINISTRATIVE CLASS BY VARIOUS ROUTES

Route of entry to the Administrative Class	Oxford	Oxford and another	Cambridge	Cambridge and another	London	Edinburgh	Any other Scottish	Any other except Scottish	None	Total
	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No.
(1) Open competition (in- cluding post-1918 re- construction)	188 41.2	16 3.5	12 2.6	22 4.8	18 3.9	16 3.5	17 3.7	8 1.7		456
(2) Other forms of direct entry from outside— 1939 and before	10 37.0	1 3.7	1 3.7	0 0	1 3.7	1 3.7	1 3.7	5 18.5		27
(3) Other forms of direct entry from outside— since 1939 (wartime entrants)	28 23.7	8 6.8	7 5.9	17 14.4	2 1.7	2 1.7	17 14.4	23 19.5		118
(4) Transfer from other branches and services	13 18.8	3 4.3	1 1.4	9 13.0	5 7.2	2 2.9	8 11.6	18 26.1		69
(5) Promotion from the ranks	10 2.7	0 0	1 0.3	10 2.7	4 1.1	8 2.1	6 1.6	331 88.3		375
All Routes	249 23.8	28 2.7	22 2.1	58 5.6	30 2.9	29 2.8	49 4.7	385 36.8		1045

TABLE 22

UNIVERSITIES ATTENDED BEFORE JOINING THE CIVIL SERVICE BY THOSE ABOVE THE RANK OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY, 1929, 1939, 1950

	Oxford		Oxford and another		Cambridge and another		London		Edinburgh		Any other Scottish		Any other except Scottish		None		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
<i>S. and D.S.</i>	19	73.1	1	3.8	1	3.8	—	—	1	3.8	—	—	—	—	—	—	26
{ Open competition	3	17.6	2	11.8	—	—	1	5.9	2	11.8	—	—	1	5.9	7	41.2	17
{ Other	22	51.2	3	7.0	1	2.3	1	2.3	3	7.0	—	—	1	2.3	7	16.3	43
{ All	18	51.4	1	2.9	1	2.9	1	2.9	3	8.6	—	—	1	2.9	1	2.9	35
<i>1939</i>	7	36.8	1	5.3	—	—	2	10.5	—	—	—	—	—	—	8	42.1	19
{ Open Competition	25	46.3	2	3.7	1	1.9	3	5.5	3	5.5	—	—	1	1.9	9	16.7	54
{ Other	30	42.3	2	2.8	1	1.4	5	7.0	5	7.0	2	2.8	2	2.8	4	5.6	71
{ All	4	16.0	2	8.0	—	—	1	4.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	15	60.0	25
<i>1950</i>	34	35.4	4	4.2	1	1.0	6	6.3	5	5.2	2	2.1	2	2.1	19	19.8	96
<i>All above A.S.</i>	44	62.0	1	1.4	3	4.2	4	5.6	2	2.8	—	—	—	—	1	1.4	71
{ Open Competition	14	28.0	3	6.0	—	—	3	6.0	3	6.0	—	—	3	6.0	21	42.0	50
{ Other	58	47.9	4	3.3	3	2.5	7	5.8	5	4.1	—	—	3	2.5	22	18.2	121
{ All	58	51.3	2	1.8	3	2.7	7	6.2	4	3.5	1	0.9	6	5.3	3	2.7	113
<i>1939</i>	16	24.2	2	3.0	1	1.5	6	9.1	1	1.5	1	1.5	1	1.5	31	47.0	66
{ Open Competition	74	41.3	4	2.2	4	2.2	13	7.3	5	2.8	2	1.1	7	3.9	34	19.0	179
{ Other	91	43.3	8	3.8	7	3.3	11	5.2	9	4.3	8	3.8	8	3.8	6	2.9	210
{ All	15	12.3	6	4.9	1	0.8	9	7.4	4	3.3	2	1.6	3	2.5	73	59.8	122
<i>1950</i>	106	31.9	14	4.2	8	2.4	20	6.0	13	3.9	10	3.0	11	3.3	79	23.8	332

TABLE 23

UNIVERSITIES OF OPEN COMPETITION ENTRANTS TO JUNIOR ADMINISTRATIVE POSTS IN HOME DEPARTMENTS,
1909-39 AND 1949-52

Period	Oxford		Oxford and another		Cambridge		Cambridge and another		London		Edinburgh		Any other Scottish		Any other except Scottish		None		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
I. 1909-14	97	52.2	2	1.1	45	24.2	5	2.7	14	7.5	8	4.3	1	0.5	10	5.4	4	2.2	186
II. 1919-20	87	44.2	9	4.6	39	19.8	7	3.6	13	6.6	8	4.1	10	5.1	14	7.1	10	5.1	197
III. 1921, 1925-32	70	43.8	5	3.1	53	33.1	6	3.8	4	2.5	10	6.3	6	3.8	5	3.1	1	0.6	160
IV. 1933-9	124	37.2	5	1.5	159	47.7	8	2.4	21	6.3	5	1.5	6	1.8	5	1.5	—	—	333
Whole Period 1909-39	378	43.2	21	2.4	296	33.8	26	3.0	52	5.9	31	3.5	23	2.6	34	3.9	15	1.7	876
1949-52:																			
Method I	66	43.4	3	2.0	42	27.6	1	0.7	15	9.9	5	3.3	11	7.2	9	5.9	—	—	152
Method II	35	49.3	1	1.4	18	25.3	—	—	12	16.9	2	2.8	2	2.8	1	1.4	—	—	71
Both Methods	101	45.3	4	1.8	60	26.9	1	0.4	27	12.1	7	3.1	13	5.8	10	4.5	—	—	223

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Amongst the senior members of the 1950 Higher Civil Service, as we have seen, the proportion who had been to a university was higher than in the group as a whole. The Oxford and Cambridge proportion is also significantly higher (60% instead of 47%), again reflecting the smaller proportion of promotees in the higher ranks. The senior ranks in 1939 and 1929 had shown an even larger percentage of Oxford and Cambridge men (66 and 69). Amongst open competition entrants in the Higher Civil Service the Oxford and Cambridge proportion was, at all three dates, more than four-fifths of the total. As would be expected, this proportion is also found amongst those entering by this route over the whole period 1909-39, except during the reconstruction competitions when it was 72%. There was no sign of a decline in the relative importance of these two universities as training grounds for competition entrants to the Administrative Class, for the percentage was actually higher at the end of the period, in 1933-9 (89), than it had been at the beginning, in 1909-14 (80). As between Oxford and Cambridge themselves, however, an important change had taken place; for whereas at the beginning Oxford's share of the combined total was two-thirds, at the end it was only 44%.

London University's proportion of senior members of the Higher Civil Service in 1929, 1939 and 1950 was about 6% or 7%, and a similar proportion is found amongst competition entrants to the Administrative Class or its equivalent during the period 1909-39. When the 1950 group of higher civil servants is subdivided according to method of entry, the proportion coming from London University is highest amongst transferees and wartime entrants (13% or 14%). Expressed as a proportion of university-trained transferees and wartime entrants only, this becomes 18%, a share roughly corresponding to London University's output of honours graduates relative to other British universities. The other university separately distinguished in our analysis, Edinburgh, accounted for some 3% or 4% of the senior members of the Higher Civil Service in 1929, 1939 and 1950, and for a similar proportion of competition entrants to the Administrative Class or its equivalent during the period 1909-39. In this last respect Edinburgh (unlike any other university or group of universities except Oxford and Cambridge) had a share roughly corresponding to its relative importance amongst British universities in the production of

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honours graduates. The only method of entry where the Edinburgh proportion shows a tendency to be higher than this is that of transfer. Amongst higher civil servants as a whole in 1950, 3% came from this university.

The other three Scottish universities combined made, if anything, a smaller contribution than Edinburgh to the Higher Civil Service. They accounted for between nil and 3% of the senior members at the three dates. Their average proportion of competition entrants over the period 1909-39 was 2½%, and their proportion of 1950 higher civil servants as a whole was under 3%. The number of students taking honours courses at these three universities combined must at all times have substantially outnumbered those at Edinburgh,⁹ and there is no reason to believe that the average level of academic ability differed materially as between the four Scottish universities. The failure of three of them to secure their proportionate share even of the Scottish total of Higher Civil Service posts therefore needs to be explained.

Why did Edinburgh University men show a greater tendency to enter for, and succeed in, the open competition than those from the other Scottish universities? The explanation seems to be that some of the Edinburgh schools, as well as the University itself, were successful in developing and maintaining a tradition in this matter. Members of the University staff (D. P. Heatley from the 1890s, T. A. Joynt from the 1920s) went out of their way to encourage every likely man to think of the Civil Service. About half of the 23 Edinburgh entrants to the Home Civil Service in the period 1899-1914, and nearly a third of the 31 who entered in the years 1919-39, had gone from George Watson's College to the University. Speaking of the period before 1914, Mr. Joynt says 'the Watsonian Civil Servants were well-known by name to those of us in the sixth form; and the majority of us who came up to the University, except those who were thirled to the Church or Law, thought, to begin with at least, however vaguely, of the Civil Service competition'.¹⁰ Despite the efforts of the other Scottish universities to develop a similar tradition (Glasgow had the services of Dr. W. R. Cunningham as Adviser on Civil Service appointments from 1926 onwards), the results were disappointing.

The remaining category, grouping together all universities not specified elsewhere, accounts for some 3% or 4% of senior members

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of the Service in 1929, 1939 and 1950, and a similar proportion of open competition entrants to the Administrative Class or its equivalent over the period 1909-39. As in the case of London University, these other universities accounted for a significantly higher proportion of wartime entrants (14%) and transferees (12%) than they did of the 1950 Higher Civil Service as a whole (5%). The proportion of wartime entrants and transferees, even when expressed as a percentage of university-trained people entering by these routes (17%), falls very far short of the share that the relative importance of these universities in terms of their output of honours graduates might lead one to expect. All the remaining universities of England, Wales and Ireland combined might have been expected to secure some two-fifths of the total, particularly when it is remembered that this residual category includes isolated cases from universities overseas.

To sum up the position, Oxford and Cambridge accounted for the bulk of the open competition entrants throughout the whole period 1909-39; Edinburgh was the only other university obtaining a share proportionate to the size of its honours schools. The other Scottish universities obtained less than their share both of the Scottish and the British aggregates, amongst all types of entrant. London's share of wartime entrants and transferees was roughly proportionate to its size. The residual universities of England, Wales and Ireland fared a little better amongst entrants of these types than they did in the open competition, but their proportion still fell very far short of what their relative size might have led one to expect.

Figures relating to open competition entrants of the most recent period, 1949-52, show a highly significant change from the pre-war position in three respects. First, there has been a substantial fall (from 89% to 74%) in the combined Oxford and Cambridge proportion of the total. Oxford's importance relative to other universities has, however, not merely been maintained, but has actually increased; the decline in the combined figures is entirely due to Cambridge. The fall in the Cambridge ratio may be due quite largely to the greater proportion of scientists at Cambridge as compared with Oxford, and to the shortage of scientific personnel in many different fields.¹¹ Secondly, London University's share of the total has nearly doubled. Thirdly, the British univer-

sities other than Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh and London have at last succeeded in obtaining a significantly larger (though still small) share of the places; instead of the 3% of pre-war years, they now account for some 10% of the total.

So far, in our analysis of the universities of successful open competition candidates, we have used as a rough guide to what might have been expected, the relative numbers of people graduating with honours at the various universities. On this basis Oxford and Cambridge in the past, and Oxford in the present, secured a very much larger proportion of the annual open competition vacancies than might have been anticipated. It can be objected, however, that this yardstick is an unsatisfactory one when we are comparing universities the academic quality of whose honours graduates is very different. On this argument, the preponderance of Oxford and Cambridge successes in the open competition is to be explained by the fact that, though it does not reflect their proportion of British honours graduates, it does correspond to their share of the intellectual cream amongst such graduates. In comparing the Scottish universities with each other, the chosen basis may be quite appropriate; but in comparing Oxford or Cambridge with any of the other British universities the basis is unsuitable.

In order to test the validity of this objection, the distribution of state scholarship holders amongst the universities of England and Wales can be examined; the form in which published data on this and related matters are available makes it necessary to exclude Scotland from consideration in the following discussion. The distribution of holders of these scholarships current in 1950-1 can be examined, remembering that this includes not only full state scholarships but also supplementary awards offered to holders of university awards.¹² Oxford had 24% of state scholarship holders, compared with 18% of honours degrees obtained in 1950-1. Cambridge had 25% against 14%. London's figures were 19% compared with 21%. The remaining universities and colleges of England and Wales had 32% of the state scholarship holders and 46% of the honours degrees obtained. If we base our expectations on quality (measured in this way) rather than quantity, the discrepancy between the observed and the expected Oxford proportion of English and Welsh university post-war open competition successes becomes less, but still remains very marked. In the four

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years 1949–52 Oxford secured 47% of these vacancies against an anticipated 24%. In the case of Cambridge and of London the discrepancy was small and not significant. Other English and Welsh universities and colleges only secured 4% or 5% of these posts compared with an expectation of 32%.

How can we explain this apparent over-representation of Oxford and under-representation of other universities and colleges in England and Wales (excluding Cambridge and London)? At first sight it seems difficult to account for the position. The pre-war preponderance of Oxford and Cambridge might have been partly due to the fact that, when interviewed, the products of these universities displayed the characteristics of traditional higher civil servants to a greater extent than did their counterparts from other universities. This seems much less likely to be true, however, of the post-war competitions. We know, for instance, that about three-quarters of the full-time students at Oxford nowadays are 'assisted', in the sense that they hold scholarships, exhibitions or other awards, whether from public or private funds, providing wholly or in part for their fees and other expenses; and that this proportion, though lower than the Welsh one, is higher than the London ratio and about the same as that for the rest of England.¹³ It is true that not all this assistance of Oxford and Cambridge students is necessarily associated with need arising from smallness of basic income; closed exhibitions are numerous, and where students' expenses are heavy the proportion requiring help naturally tends to be larger. Nevertheless, as the Commissioners themselves have remarked, 'the day is past . . . when these universities stood for a certain social type'.¹⁴

The key to the problem is found when we look at the unsuccessful as well as the successful candidates. An analysis of the whole field of candidates for entry to the Home Administrative Class in one pre-war year, 1938, undertaken by permission of the Civil Service Commissioners, showed that only 4% of those from English and Welsh universities came from universities other than Oxford, Cambridge and London. The corresponding proportion amongst 1939 candidates for the Home, Indian and Burma Civil Services was 2% (if 'unattached' external graduates are grouped with London).¹⁵ On roughly the same basis, the Home Civil Service proportion had risen to 13% in 1948, the only other year for which

published figures relating to unsuccessful candidates exist. At that time the share of the whole field of entrants from England and Wales coming from non-London 'Redbricks' might have been expected to be 32% on state scholarship figures, or 46% on honours degrees obtained. The main factor in their under-representation in obtaining vacancies would appear, therefore, to be the failure of candidates from these universities to enter for the competition. It is worth noticing, nevertheless, that of those who did present themselves in 1948 only 1 out of 33 succeeded, against a proportion of 1 in every 9 from London, 2 in 9 from Cambridge, and 2 in 7 from Oxford.

On the available data, an explanation of the post-war position would have to take the following form. In the general field of candidates for the open competition, Oxford is heavily over-represented, and the English and Welsh 'Redbricks' (other than London) are heavily under-represented. There are several possible reasons for this. Is it because many of the students at the newer, outlying universities were unaware both of the existence of a separate Administrative Class and of the factors making it more attractive than many other branches of the Civil Service? The Civil Service Commissioners and the University Appointments Boards do their best to make the position known, but it may not be as effective as advice from one's tutor at an Oxford college. Is it because a high proportion of honours students in arts subjects at these universities have, until recently, been at least morally committed to a teaching career, by virtue of financial aid received from central or local education authorities? It is not easy to break a long-established tradition that only those who have been to Oxford or Cambridge should compete; and the relative lack of success in the post-war competitions of candidates from other universities provides a superficially logical basis for the continued observance of this convention. The reason why those from the newer universities fared badly may, of course, have been because the best of them did not compete, because the examination did not link up as satisfactorily with their previous studies, or because their interviews were less successful. The numbers of such students in our 1938 enquiry were too small to enable us to test any of these hypotheses; and the published information both pre-war and post-war is quite inadequate for the purpose.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SOCIAL ORIGIN BASED ON FATHER'S OCCUPATION

OCCUPATION has been widely recognized as one of the more useful indications of social status, preferably but not necessarily in combination with other factors (e.g. income). As one of the main purposes of the present study was to discover in what proportions the Higher Civil Service was being, and had been, drawn from different social strata, it was obviously desirable to know the occupations of the fathers of our 1950, 1939 and 1929 groups. It has already been explained that, both because the information on this point in the Civil Service Commission's possession was unsatisfactory and because the Commissioners were reluctant to extract the pre-war material, a difficult and lengthy procedure had to be adopted to fill in this gap.¹ Attention had to be confined to the senior members of the groups (i.e. those above the rank of Assistant Secretary); but in only one out of the 632 cases involved was the necessary information not finally obtained.² In order to secure uniformity in the stage of the civil servant's life to which the data related, father's occupation had to be taken at or near the time of the child's birth. Had it been possible to conduct the enquiry by means of a questionnaire, the father's occupation when the child was 10 or 11 years old might have been sought, as having a more direct bearing on the educational opportunities of the future civil servant. As, however, many of those in the 1929 and 1939 groups were no longer alive, comparative information could not have been obtained even in this way.

Though every effort was made to ensure that the descriptions of the fathers' occupations were as clear and precise as possible, by

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combining all that could be gleaned from published sources (including old local directories) with unpublished birth registration data, the cases for which the least detailed information could be obtained put certain limits on the form in which the material could be classified and analysed. For comparison with the results of the social mobility enquiry mentioned in Chapter I, it would have been extremely valuable to be able to classify the present data in the seven categories employed there, or even in groupings based on those categories.³ That classification was, however, designed for use where questionnaires or interviews were employed; it depends on occupational descriptions of so detailed a character that only subjects or their relatives could supply them. For example, the grouping depends, in the case of owners or managers of manufacturing or trading establishments, on the approximate number of work-people employed; no fewer than five out of the seven categories are involved in this difficulty. Again, teachers are spread over three of the seven classes. For our purposes classes six and seven (manual, semi-skilled: manual, unskilled) would, even when amalgamated, have contained very few cases. The use of this sevenfold classification would therefore have meant a grouping into two divisions only, one comprising classes 1-5 and the second classes 6 and 7, with the number of cases in the second division so small, when the material was broken down, as to rule out the use of significance tests in validating our results.

It was therefore necessary to fall back on one of the other standard groupings and, despite certain difficulties, the material has been analysed in terms of two of those employed in the 1951 population census publications of Great Britain—the five social class categories, and the thirteen socio-economic groups. The social class categories are, of course, available for an earlier census date; but the classification at that time was even less satisfactory than it is to-day (e.g. civil servants in the Administrative Class were grouped with certain lower classes and allocated to category 2).⁴ The socio-economic groups have not been used in any previous census. Although no national aggregates have been published on the basis of this new grouping, the Registrar-General was able to provide these when asked to do so for the purpose of the present study.

For the higher civil servants of 1929, who were mostly born

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between 1870 and 1890, the most appropriate occupational distribution of males with which to compare the occupational distribution of their fathers would have been one relating to that period, and for the higher civil servants of 1939 and 1950, dates ten and twenty years later. The most satisfactory *groupings* of occupations from our point of view were, however, those used in the 1951 census. Unfortunately, the changes of occupational classification in successive censuses make it impossible to present national figures relating to earlier dates in the 1951 groups. There are, however, good reasons for supposing that the distribution of occupied males between the Registrar-General's social classes as now defined has not changed substantially between the end of the nineteenth century and 1951. In the social mobility enquiry referred to above, where a 10,000 sample of the adult population was analysed and seven status categories were used, it was found that the distribution of the fathers between these status categories was not materially different in the case of subjects born before 1890 and those born in the four subsequent ten-year periods.⁵ Again, when Professor Bowley's middle-class occupations are compared for 1951 and the three previous census dates, it is found that the proportion of occupied males in the whole group altered very little between 1911 and 1951. The use of the 1951 census figures in the most recent groupings (both social classes and socio-economic groups) for comparison with the distribution of fathers whose working life related to earlier periods, should not, therefore, involve serious error, although the importance of observed differences in any of the smaller categories ought not to be overstressed.

In order to preserve as much as possible of the detail of the original material, classification on the standard lines so far described was supplemented by a much more detailed but purely *ad hoc* grouping, which enables the specific contribution of various professions and occupations at the different dates to be compared. Thus, if Table 24 is examined, it can readily be seen that the Church and teaching between them have, both now and before the war, accounted for about one-fifth of the total. By comparison with this, the contribution of the legal profession and the army and navy looks small, and has in both cases shown a tendency to decline. Self-recruitment in the profession we are studying has

been small and fairly constant in extent if we take the 3% or 4% of higher civil servants whose fathers were clerks in the Administrative Class or its equivalent as our yardstick. Although these figures of fathers include administrators in the Indian Civil as well as the Home, Foreign and Diplomatic Services, this low rate of self-recruitment is partly to be explained by the comparatively small size of the profession in the past. If we include all fathers who were civil servants of any kind, the proportion is doubled before the war and trebled since. Clerks in employments other than the Civil Service account for a further 9% or 10% of the total. Other professional groups have hitherto played a relatively minor part.

Fathers engaged in ownership and management in the field of industry and trade used to contribute about the same proportion of higher civil servants (one-fifth) as the key professions of teaching and the Church, though the percentage has fallen since the war. Retail trade accounted for about half of this; and here the scale of operations was usually (though not always) fairly small. A third or more of the children with shopkeeping fathers were promoted from the ranks, compared with only a sixth in the case of the rest of industry and commerce. Children of fathers in most of the professions, apart from ordinary clerks, entered the Administrative Class direct from outside or from a similar level within the Service, but not from below.

Two of the other occupational classes distinguished in Table 24 show interesting changes. The children of salesmen have grown in numbers; and though they still form a small proportion of the total, they account for some 8% of all promotees. The children of manual workers now constitute nearly 17% of the total, against less than 10% before the war. More than half of them have been promoted from the ranks.⁶

All the proportions so far discussed relate to senior members of the Higher Civil Service at the three dates 1929, 1939 and 1950. The Civil Service Commissioners provided information relating to the entrants to the Administrative Class by the open competitions of the four years 1949-52 which, when supplemented by birth registration data, enabled a similar analysis to be made for them. When these new recruits to the Administrative Class are compared with the senior members of the 1950 Higher Civil Service who had *not* been promoted from the ranks (and who had therefore, in most

TABLE 24

FATHER'S OCCUPATION AT CHILD'S BIRTH IN THE CASE OF (a) THOSE ABOVE THE RANK OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY 1929, 1939, 1950, (b) ENTRANTS BY THE OPEN COMPETITIONS OF 1949-52
ARRANGED ACCORDING TO A DETAILED *AD HOC* GROUPING OF OCCUPATIONS

	1929			1939			1950			Entrants by Open Competitions of 1949-52 No. %
	Promotees	Others	Total %	Promotees	Others	Total %	Promotees	Others	Total %	
<i>Landed Gentry, Independent Means Professional, Technical and Clerical Occupations</i>	—	10	10	8.3	1	4	5	2.8	—	—
Clergymen and Ministers	2	14	16	13.2	1	16	17	9.5	3	8
Mission Workers	1	—	1	.8	1	—	1	.6	—	—
Judges, Stipendiary Magistrates, Barristers (practising)	—	3	3	2.5	—	9	9	5.0	—	6
Solicitors	—	4	4	3.3	—	6	6	3.3	1	—
Physicians, Surgeons, Registered Medical Practitioners	—	3	3	2.5	—	5	5	2.8	1	5
Dental Practitioners	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	.6	—	1
University Teachers	—	5	5	4.1	—	4	4	2.2	—	5
Other Teachers	—	9	9	7.4	1	9	10	5.6	3	12
Qualified Engineers, Surveyors, Architects, Analytical Chemists	—	2	2	1.6	—	5	5	2.8	3	14
Draughtsmen	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	.6	—	4
Qualified Accountants, Actuaries, Company Secretaries, Stock Brokers	—	1	1	.8	—	5	5	2.8	—	10
Commissioned Officers (effective) in Navy, Army, Air Force	—	5	5	4.1	2	6	8	4.5	—	6
Master Mariners	—	2	2	1.6	1	2	3	1.7	—	—

	15	106	121	29	150	179	77	254	331	223
Authors, Editors, Journalists	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	1.3
Artists, Musicians	—	—	1	—	—	3	1	3	4	1.2
Civil Service Clerks, Administrative Class or Equivalent	—	—	5	1	6	7	—	9	9	2.7
Civil Service Clerks, below Administrative Class	1	3	4	—	5	5	4	18	22	6.6
Civil Service Professional Posts	—	—	1	1	2	3	—	4	4	1.2
Clerks to Societies, Governing Bodies, etc.	—	—	1	1	3	4	1	3	4	1.2
Solicitor's Clerks, Bank Clerks	—	5	5	—	5	5	2	6	8	2.4
Other Clerks	1	4	5	2	8	10	5	12	17	5.1
Agriculture, Industry and Trade (Ownership & Management)										
Rubber Planters	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Farmers (and Farm Bailiffs)	1	2	3	—	3	3	2	1	3	.9
Manufacturers (Proprietors or Sons)	2	5	7	1	7	8	1	7	8	1.3
Manufacturers (Managers)	—	1	1	—	1	1	—	4	4	5.8
Wholesale Merchants (Proprietors or Sons)	1	5	6	2	8	10	3	6	9	1.3
Wholesale Merchants (Managers or Buyers)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	2	4.5
Retail Traders (Proprietors or Sons)	2	10	12	6	10	16	8	18	26	.4
Retail Traders (Managers)	—	—	—	1	—	1	2	1	3	2.2
Salesmen	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2.7
Commercial Travellers	—	—	—	—	4	4	4	7	11	1.8
Shop Assistants	—	1	1	1	1	2	2	5	7	.4
Manual Workers, Domestic Servants										
Foremen, Overseers, Policemen, Minor Inspectors (Water, Tramway, etc.)	—	1	1	1	1	2	7	2	9	6.3
Domestic Servants	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	2	—
Skilled Manual Workers (own business)	3	1	4	2	3	5	2	1	3	.9
Skilled Manual Workers (other)	1	2	3	2	3	5	16	17	33	10.0
Semi-Skilled and Unskilled Manual Workers	—	—	—	1	4	5	5	3	8	2.4
Total	15	106	121	29	150	179	77	254	331	223

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cases, entered by open competitions of the period 1909-39), certain interesting contrasts emerge. Nearly 19% of the new recruits were children of manual workers, compared with 9% in the other case, and this difference is statistically highly significant. The only other significant difference in the detailed occupational figures is the lower proportion (4% compared with 11%) of children of clergymen and ministers of religion amongst the new recruits. Otherwise the observed differences are so small that we should not be justified in attaching any importance to them. The tendency towards self-recruitment, measured in any of the ways described above, seems to have remained fairly constant.

We can turn now from this fairly detailed *ad hoc* grouping to the Registrar-General's five social class groups as used in the 1951 census. Class 1 contains most of the professions, except teaching; and also commissioned officers in the Forces and those of Administrative Class or equivalent status in the Civil Service. Class 2 includes teachers, owners and managers of businesses of most kinds, and many civil servants. Class 3 comprises other clerks, foremen and skilled manual workers. Classes 4 and 5 cover semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers. Though this grouping has many unsatisfactory features, it is of value in two main respects for the present study. First, by combining Classes 1 and 2 (together with those not gainfully occupied) and comparing this group with a combination of Classes 3, 4 and 5, sufficient numbers of cases usually occur in the statistical 'cells' to enable the significance of observed differences to be tested, even when the figures are broken down into different methods of entry, or different groupings of ranks. Secondly, comparisons can be made between the occupational distributions of the fathers of our civil servants on the one hand and of the male population of Great Britain aged 20-64 in 1951 on the other.

In Table 25, three methods of entry to the Administrative Class are distinguished. It can fairly clearly be seen from this Table that, at all three dates (1929, 1939 and 1950), the social origin of those who entered by open competition was similar to that of those entering by 'other routes' (i.e. other forms of direct entry and all forms of transfer); while the social class distribution of promotees was very different. Statistical tests applied after combining the classes as described above show that these observed similarities

TABLE 25

FATHER'S OCCUPATION AT CHILD'S BIRTH IN THE CASE OF (a) THOSE ABOVE THE RANK OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY
1929, 1939, 1950, (b) ENTRANTS BY THE OPEN COMPETITIONS OF 1949-52
ARRANGED ACCORDING TO THE REGISTRAR-GENERAL'S SOCIAL CLASS GROUPS (1951 CENSUS)

Entrants by Open Competitions of 1949-52																	
		1929				1939				1950							
		Social Class Groups		No Gain-ful Occ.		Social Class Groups		No Gain-ful Occ.		Social Class Groups		No Gain-ful Occ.		Social Class Groups		No Gain-ful Occ.	
		I	II	III	IV & V	I	II	III	IV & V	I	II	III	IV & V	I	II	III	IV & V
Open Competition	No.	7	26	33	5	—	3	46	47	15	2	9	74	90	34	3	—
	%	9.9	36.6	46.5	7.0	—	2.6	40.7	41.6	13.3	1.8	4.3	35.2	42.9	16.2	1.4	—
Promotees	No.	—	2	8	5	—	1	5	14	8	1	—	8	27	36	6	—
	%	—	13.3	53.3	33.3	—	3.4	17.3	48.3	27.6	3.4	—	10.4	35.1	46.7	7.8	—
Other	No.	3	12	16	4	—	1	15	14	5	2	1	15	17	10	1	—
	%	8.6	34.3	45.7	11.4	—	2.7	40.5	37.8	13.5	5.4	2.3	34.1	38.6	22.7	2.3	—
Total	No.	10	40	57	14	—	5	66	75	28	5	10	97	134	80	10	—
	%	8.3	33.0	47.1	11.6	—	2.8	36.9	41.9	15.6	2.8	3.0	29.3	40.5	24.2	3.0	—

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and differences are significant. The view that the gulf separating the Administrative Class from the lower classes of the Service was a social one is amply borne out by this new evidence, which lends further support to the arguments advanced in Chapter III. There, it will be remembered, figures were given showing the schools and fathers' occupations of direct entrants to different classes of the Service at various dates.

Table 25 also enables us to compare the social origin of those who entered the Administrative Class by the same route, but were members of the Higher Civil Service at different dates (1929, 1939, 1950). Promotees in the two pre-war groups were broadly similar in origin, but of those in the 1950 group a significantly larger proportion came from the lower social strata (considerably more than half, compared with a third on the pre-war occasions). The transferees and non-competition direct entrants showed a tendency in the same direction, but it was not sufficiently marked to be conclusive. The open competition entrants showed no material change between 1939 and 1950, and though a larger proportion of them in the 1939 group appear to have come from the lower social classes than had been the case in 1929, this difference is not large enough to be significant.

It is worth while to pursue the question of open competition entrants a little further. One way of doing so is to divide them into two types, according to whether the competition was pre-war (1914 and earlier) or post-war. When this is done for the 1950 group, we find that there was no significant difference between pre-war and post-war entrants in their social origin; and the position is found to be the same when we amalgamate the 1950, 1939 and 1929 groups and compare these two types of entrant. There is, on the basis of these figures, no evidence to suggest that the post-war competitions were tapping the lower social strata to a significantly greater extent than the pre-war ones had done. In view of the gradual improvement of the educational ladder over the period, it might have been expected that some change in that direction would have taken place. Is it fanciful to suggest that one reason why this did *not* happen was that after 1918 an interview formed a major part of the examination?

The newest recruits to the Administrative Class by the open competitions of 1949-52 can be compared with those senior

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members of the Higher Civil Service in 1950 who had come in by the open competition route. When this is done, and the observed differences are compared between the group with fathers having no gainful occupation or engaged in those coming within the first two of the Registrar-General's categories, and the group comprising the remainder of the cases, these observed differences are found to be statistically significant. The fact that 73% of the new recruits came into the first of these divisions, as against 82% of the senior civil servants who were open competition entrants, can be taken to mean a significant change in the social strata from which open competition entrants to the Administrative Class are drawn. That change, as we saw from the more detailed occupational distribution, has taken the form of an increased proportion of children of manual workers. Two points should, however, be emphasized. First, there are reasons for supposing, as suggested in the schools analysis, that this change has been due to a changed social origin distribution of *candidates*, rather than to any marked tendency for the modified selection procedure of the post-1948 period to choose a sample with a different social bias from the pre-1939 one. Secondly, although the proportion of children of manual workers has risen significantly amongst open competition entrants, the proportion of such children amongst the *promotees* in the 1950 group of senior civil servants (40%) was more than twice as great as the corresponding proportion amongst the newest recruits by way of open competition (19%).

Does the proportion of those of lowly social origin vary as between the ranks of the Service? It was necessary, as already explained, to confine our enquiry into father's occupation to the higher ranks, and these can only satisfactorily be split into two categories (Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries on the one hand, Under-Secretaries and Principal Assistant Secretaries on the other). There was, in 1939, a significantly smaller proportion of cases of humble social origin amongst those in the first of these categories than there was amongst those in the second. In the 1950 group the same tendency could be observed, but the difference between the two sets of ranks was no longer large enough to be statistically significant. Quite possibly the change between 1939 and 1950 is to be explained by the rapid promotion, under war conditions, of those who, though they lacked the polish of the

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typical senior civil servant of pre-war days, had the other necessary qualities.

How does the distribution of parental occupations amongst our higher civil servants compare with the occupational pattern of the adult male population as a whole? For the purpose of this comparison we can use the distribution of the male population of Great Britain aged 20-64 in the 1951 census 1% sample. It can be noted that 1.5% of the sample consisted of those who, because they were not and had not been gainfully occupied, could not be allocated to any particular social class or socio-economic group. This 1.5% is clearly an overestimate of those of independent means, since it must include other categories such as students and disabled persons. It seems likely, therefore, that those of private means are over-represented amongst the fathers of our higher civil servants at all three dates, even allowing for the higher proportion of such people in the population as a whole at earlier periods.

When we turn to the Registrar-General's social classes, some very striking differences emerge. Class 1, which only accounts for 3.4% of the adult male population of working age, has hitherto included a third of the fathers of senior members of the Higher Civil Service, and even now includes 29.3% of them. Classes 1 and 2 together form only 18.4% of the census sample, but account for nearly 70% of higher civil servants' fathers in the 1950 group, and 80% or so in the 1939 and 1929 groups. The under-representation of classes 3, 4 and 5 is correspondingly marked. Divergence from the national social class pattern is, of course, greatest amongst those senior civil servants who entered by way of the Administrative Class open competition; here a census percentage of nearly 80 in the three lowest social classes compares with proportions of between 15% and 18% in our 1939 and 1950 groups. Even amongst the promotees in our 1950 group, only 54.5% of the fathers are found in the social classes of which four-fifths of the adult male population of working age is composed; within these social classes, the semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers were the most poorly represented of all both absolutely and relatively to the potential numbers. If these promotees were at all a random sample (in terms of social origin) of the lower ranks of the Service, the figures illustrate the inadequacies of the pre-war English educational ladder in its middle, as well as its higher reaches.⁷

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The differences shown when the proportions in the thirteen socio-economic groups are compared are no less striking (see Table 26). Amongst the non-agricultural categories, the proportion of fathers in group 3 (higher administrative, professional and

TABLE 26

FATHER'S OCCUPATION AT CHILD'S BIRTH IN THE CASE OF (a)
THOSE ABOVE THE RANK OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY 1929, 1939, 1950,
(b) ENTRANTS BY THE OPEN COMPETITIONS OF 1949-52
ARRANGED ACCORDING TO THE REGISTRAR-GENERAL'S SOCIO-
ECONOMIC GROUPS (1951 CENSUS)

		1929	1939	1950	Entrants by Open Competitions of 1949-52	Great Britain: 1951 Census (1% Sample) Percentage of Males 20-64
		No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	
Not gainfully occupied Group	1	10 8.3	5 2.8	10 3.0	— —	1.5
	2	3 2.5	3 1.7	3 .9	5 2.2	2.0
	3	— —	1 .6	1 .3	— —	4.5
	4	47 38.8	74 41.3	105 31.7	83 37.2	3.3
	5	29 24.0	37 20.7	83 25.1	53 23.8	9.6
	6	18 14.9	27 15.1	40 12.1	21 9.4	3.7
	7	5 4.1	10 5.6	17 5.1	14 6.3	4.7
	8	1 .8	6 3.3	18 5.5	5 2.2	3.2
	9	— —	— —	2 .6	— —	2.2
	10	1 .8	1 .6	5 1.5	12 5.4	3.6
	11 & 12	7 5.8	11 6.1	40 11.1	26 11.7	35.9
	13	— —	4 2.2	7 2.1	4 1.8	23.7
		— —	— —	— —	— —	2.1
Total		121 100.0	179 100.0	331 100.0	223 100.0	100.0

DESCRIPTIONS OF GROUPS:

A. Agricultural

1. Farmers.
2. Agricultural workers.

B. Non-Agricultural

I. Non-Manual

3. Higher administrative, professional and managerial (including large employers).
4. Intermediate administrative, professional and managerial (including teachers and salaried staff).

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5. Shopkeepers and other small employers.
6. Clerical workers.
7. Shop assistants.
8. Personal service.

II. Manual

9. Foremen.
10. Skilled workers.
11. Semi-skilled workers.
12. Unskilled workers.

C. Special group not included elsewhere

13. Armed Forces (other ranks).

Note: The figures on which the national percentages in the final column are based have not been published, but were supplied by the Registrar-General for the purpose of the present study. For an explanation of the use of 1951 figures for comparison with data relating to earlier periods, see p. 148.

managerial) was ten or more times as great as the national occupational distribution would lead one to expect; while the percentage in groups 11 and 12 combined (semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers) was less than a tenth of the national proportion. The other main cases of marked over-representation were group 4 (intermediate administrative, professional and managerial) and group 5 (shopkeepers and other small employers); skilled manual workers (group 10) and possibly also foremen (group 9) were correspondingly under-represented. Groups 6 and 7 (clerical workers and shop assistants) had roughly the same representation as occurred in the adult male population of working age. Comparison is difficult when we come to the agricultural categories, because the number of cases amongst the fathers of our senior civil servants is too small to be statistically reliable; but they would appear to be under-represented.

The father's occupation material was put to one additional use of some importance. Throughout the present study there are numerous cases where the only available information with any bearing on social origin is the last school attended. For the senior civil servants in the Higher Administrative Class *both* types of information had been obtained, and this provided an opportunity of testing the reliability of the last school attended as an index of social origin. Attention was deliberately confined to the 1950 group, in order that the results of the test should be broadly applicable to open competition entrants of the inter-war period and to Assistant Secretaries in 1950.

In order that there should be sufficient cases in the individual

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statistical 'cells', it was necessary to adopt the same grouping of the Registrar-General's 1951 social classes into two divisions, with 'no gainful occupation' and social classes 1 and 2 in the first division, and social classes 3, 4 and 5 in the second. For the same reason individual schools could not be tested, but only school categories (or groups of categories). It was found that the association between attending schools of certain types and having a father in the first division of social classes was highly significant. The school groupings in which this proved to be true were predominantly boarding-schools taken alone *or* in combination with day schools in membership of the Headmasters' Conference in 1939. When the Headmasters' Conference day schools were taken by themselves, the association was significant but not, as in the earlier cases, highly significant. In terms of the school categories used in the present study, therefore, a useful index of broad variations in social origin is provided by combining the first 3 or the first 4 categories.

Applying this index to certain groups for which we have schools data but no information on father's occupation, the following results are obtained. Although the proportion of Assistant Secretaries in 1950 who had been at boarding-schools (20.6%) was slightly lower than obtained amongst those of higher rank (23.3%), this difference was not statistically significant. As the same result was obtained when boarding-schools plus 1939 Headmasters' Conference day schools were compared for the two groups, we may reasonably assume that the proportion of Assistant Secretaries in 1950 whose fathers' occupations came into the two divisions of social classes, was not likely to have been significantly different from the proportion found among their colleagues of higher rank. In a broad sense, therefore, the social origin of the Higher Civil Service as a whole was, in 1950, probably similar in its distribution to the pattern we have already traced for its senior members. Strictly speaking, we cannot say the same for our earlier years, 1939 and 1929, because we lack complete schools information for Assistant Secretaries as a whole; but the preponderance of open competition entrants (for whom we have the necessary data) in the Higher Civil Service of those years makes it likely that the same statement would be true in those cases as well. One other application of the schools test of social origin may usefully be made.

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There has been no significant change in the proportion of open competition candidates entering the Administrative Class who went to boarding-schools (averaging 68% to 70%) when we compare the reconstruction competitions after the 1914-18 war, the period 1925-32, and the period 1933-9. We may reasonably assume, therefore, that the bulk of the open competition entrants in the Higher Civil Service at least during the next ten or fifteen years will be similar in social background to those of 1950.

If we look still further ahead, however, there is a likelihood of important changes in this respect. We have already seen that the open competition entrants to the Administrative Class in the four years 1949-52 differed significantly in social origin from the open competition senior civil servants of 1950. In twenty or twenty-five years' time, therefore, the social origin distribution of higher civil servants who entered by this route will be modified accordingly. Moreover, we have, in the 'education of certain candidates' section of future issues of the *Annual Reports* of the Civil Service Commissioners, a useful means of judging what further modifications are to be expected. For the results that emerged from comparing type of secondary school attended and father's occupation amongst senior members of the Higher Civil Service, were found to hold good of similar comparisons in the case of the 1949-52 open competition entrants. It was found that there was a highly significant association between a boarding-school education and having a father in either of the first two of the Registrar-General's social classes. There was also a significant association between going to a local education authority secondary school and *not* having a father in one of those classes. These relationships may, of course, be modified as the full effects of the 1944 Education Act become apparent, but it is unlikely that they will vanish altogether.⁸

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE OCCUPANTS OF SIX KEY POSTS AT FOUR DATES

How do the higher civil servants of to-day differ in social origin from their counterparts of sixty or seventy years ago who owed their initial appointments to patronage? No statistical information exists on this point, and it would be virtually impossible, even with unlimited time and with all the resources of the Civil Service Commission at one's disposal, to assemble the necessary material for any date earlier than 1929. The gap can be bridged to some extent, as we have seen, by showing what changes took place in the policy of promotion from the ranks, in the open competition arrangements, and so on. It seemed worth attempting to go further than this, however, and to compare those who held certain key posts at widely-separated intervals of time. Those who had distinguished themselves by rising to the highest posts in the Service must, it was thought, have formed the subject of biographies in the *D.N.B.* and lengthy obituaries in *The Times*.¹ From these and other sources it was hoped that sufficient information would be available. The precaution was taken, however, of choosing the earlier dates in such a way that the personal statements of Heads of Departments in evidence before Commissions of Enquiry could form a supplementary source of biographical data. Even with this precaution, and although the survey was limited to six key posts at four dates, the very greatest difficulty was found in assembling the material on which the following account is based.

The civil servants chosen for comparison were the Heads of six Departments (Treasury, Board of Trade, Admiralty, War Office, Home Office and Colonial Office) in 1888, 1912, 1929 and 1950. Taking intervals of roughly twenty years ensured that the same

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man would never appear twice. And although the earliest date, 1888, fell within the period of the reformed Civil Service, the occupants of our posts at that date had all begun their Service careers before open competitions were instituted.

Perhaps the most noticeable feature of the members of the 1888 group is that all their fathers were men of a certain position and influence, though not, for the most part, members of the aristocracy. There was a Lieutenant Governor of the Virgin Islands, a Receiver-General of Crown rents for the northern counties, a judge and Member of Parliament, a Dean of an Oxford college, a landowner (also an M.P.) and a rector (son of a baronet). The mothers included a duke's, an admiral's and a colonel's daughter. Of the men themselves, two had been at Eton, one at Rugby and one at Charterhouse. The remaining two were apparently educated privately; both had elder brothers at Clarendon schools. Two of the six had been at Oxford and one at Cambridge, the other three not having gone to a university. All but one were career civil servants with no outside experience. The exception had been practising as a barrister, and only joined as Counsel to the Home Office when he was 37.

None, as mentioned earlier, was young enough to have entered by way of the post-1870 open competition arrangements. One started work in the Board of Trade at the age of 16, and became its Head thirty-four years later. He says himself that, but for the thought of his pension, he would have left long before then.² His early days were spent entirely in copying; 'you certainly acquired an amount of knowledge of the office in that way, which was very valuable to you afterwards'.³ Another entered the Admiralty as a temporary clerk at 18, and became its Head twenty-four years later. The other non-university man started in the Colonial Office at the age of 23 and became Permanent Under-Secretary for War twenty-five years later. Of the university men, one went straight into the Treasury at twenty-four and became Permanent Secretary twenty-nine years later; a second was Colonial Secretary in Queensland for a time, and became Head of the Colonial Office at the age of forty after a period in the Board of Trade; the third, as already noticed, practised as a barrister before joining the Home Office at 37, becoming Permanent Under-Secretary at 53.

In terms of the classification of methods of entry used in other

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sections of the present study, we should probably have to describe two of these cases as promotion from the ranks, one as direct entry (otherwise than by competition), and the remaining two as transfer from other branches and Services. The two promotees were, however, of the same social class as their fellows who entered the Service when they were older. We do not know how Sir Henry Calcraft obtained his first post in the Board of Trade (at £90 a year) when he was 16, but the other promoted man, Sir Evan MacGregor, shows how useful it could be to have influential relatives. At 18 his father's first cousin procured him a nomination from the Duke of Somerset (then First Lord) to a temporary clerkship in the Admiralty. This cousin himself became Junior Naval Lord a year later, and shortly afterwards took him as his private secretary. He was private secretary to increasingly influential people for the next seventeen years, and was made Permanent Secretary at 42 (an age at which the promotees of a later period would, if exceptionally lucky, have reached the rank of Principal or of Assistant Secretary).

Our next group, the occupants of the same six posts in 1912, twenty-four years later, shows very different characteristics. Their fathers, in the main, lack the measure of distinction possessed by their earlier counterparts. One is a captain in the navy, one a clergyman, and a third a gentleman farmer; the others are a partner in a firm of wholesale tea merchants, a bookseller, and the superintendent of an evangelical mission. Their schools confirm the differences in social origin suggested by their fathers' occupations. For though one was at Cheltenham and another was educated privately, the others were at Bristol Grammar School, the City of London School and (in two cases) local Aberdeen schools. Of the four who had been at universities one had been at Oxford alone; one at London and Oxford; one at Aberdeen and Oxford; and the fourth at Aberdeen alone.

Their methods of entry also provide an interesting contrast with 1888. No fewer than four of them had been successful in the open competition for Class 1 posts; the remaining two were direct entrants without examination. None, it should be noticed, had been promoted from the ranks. The virtual cessation of such inter-class promotion in the twenty years following 1870, and the sparing way in which (apart from a few Departments) the exceptional

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powers were used subsequently, had both helped to bring about this startling change. This was also reflected in the ages at which the 1912 group began their Civil Service careers; none started at 16, or even 18, the youngest being 21. The replacement of patronage by open competition as the standard procedure for recruitment had brought about a significant change in the social calibre of the leading members of the Service; it was not until after two world wars that promotion from the lower ranks was to make its contribution to the same process.

In view of the extent to which those who succeeded in the open competition normally tended to be Oxford or Cambridge men, it is interesting that two out of the four open competition entrants in this 1912 group should have been Aberdeen graduates. For although one of them (Sir Edward Troup) went on to Oxford, he had only been there a year when he took his Civil Service examination. Of the other two open competition entrants one was an Oxford man, while the other had apparently not been to a university at all. It was in these early years of the competition, of course, that the lack of any limit on the number of papers a candidate might take provided opportunities for those whose studies had been wide rather than deep. There was also, it will be remembered, no interview. This was perhaps fortunate for the three out of the four competition entrants who were not only of undistinguished Scottish parentage, but had also not been educated at a leading English public school, a combination of unfavourable factors which might well have made them appear so unlike the traditional senior civil servant of earlier days as to prejudice any interviewing board against them.

In several respects the 1929 group shows little significant change from the 1912 position. The fathers' occupations seem to be of broadly the same social standing as they had been on the earlier occasion. One is a barrister, another of independent means and the son of a clergyman; a third is a schoolmaster and lexicographer; while the other three are a manufacturer and retailer of fancy leather goods, a bank clerk, and a clerk to a rural district council. The schools at which five members of the group were educated are Winchester, Tonbridge, Merchant Taylors', Oxford High School, and George Watson's Edinburgh; the sixth was educated privately. Five were open competition entrants, and one was a direct entrant

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without examination. The university position has, however, changed. Of the five who were university men four were Oxford and one was Edinburgh and Leipzig; all five had taken the open competition before an interview was introduced. As in 1912, none of these six civil servants occupying key positions is a promoted man.

If there seems to have been little change between 1912 and 1929, the 1950 group shows several interesting and important developments. For the first time manual workers appear amongst the fathers of the six members of the group. Alongside a clergyman, a doctor of medicine (who was also Poet Laureate), a grocer and a customs officer, we have a gas meter fitter and a ganger (Royal Arsenal). This time the schools are Eton, Rossall, Christ's Hospital, Harrison College Barbados, Rotherham Grammar School, and Haberdashers' Aske's. The two whose fathers were manual workers had themselves been promoted from the ranks of the Service and had not had a university education. This is a major change and a hopeful sign of the future. (As a matter of interest, there were no promotees or sons of manual workers amongst the holders of these offices in 1939; all were open competition or post-1918 reconstruction entrants.) The other four all came in by way of the reconstruction examinations of 1919 and 1920 which temporarily replaced the open competition. Three of them had been to Oxford and one to Cambridge. All four had been successful in the competition at a time when the result turned very largely on the interview.

To sum up the results of this comparison of the occupants of six key posts at four dates, there are some respects in which a remarkable degree of continuity has been shown, and some where almost revolutionary changes have occurred. Several elements of continuity can easily be found. There has always been at least one, and usually two, of the more expensive and best-known English boarding-schools represented. Usually two or more of the members of the group have been Oxford men. And always at least two have had fathers in one of the professions. Moreover, since open competitions have been instituted, at least four of these occupants of key posts have been chosen from those who entered by that route. The elements of change can equally easily be distinguished. Of the dates we have chosen, two (1912 and 1950) show changes of great

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importance. 1912 saw a marked decline in the social distinction of the fathers; sons of those in trade appeared for the first time in this group, and this element has appeared again on both the subsequent occasions. This was a direct result of replacing patronage by open competition; it was no longer necessary to have influence in order to gain a foothold in the Service. Nor was it necessary at this time to satisfy an interviewing board as to your manners and general bearing, and this may well have been one reason why the observed change of social origin in 1912 was so pronounced. 1950 saw a new factor contributing towards the tapping of still lower social strata in recruiting to these senior posts; two out of the six were now filled by promotees whose fathers had been manual workers. With such small numbers the actual proportion may, of course, be misleading, but the principle is of vital significance.

CHAPTER NINE

WOMEN IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE CLASS

THE first employment of women in the Civil Service dates from the 1870s. On the one hand there was routine clerical work, women coming to undertake some of this originally in the P.O. Telegraph Clearing Office, the practice gradually spreading to many other branches of Post Office activity, and the example ultimately being followed thirty or forty years later by the Board of Education and certain other Departments. Open competition as a means of selecting girl and women clerks in the Post Office was introduced in the 1880s, with age limits 18-20. Although a few women were able in time to rise to supervisory posts within the field thus opened to them, there was no question of their being promoted to the Second Division, far less to the Higher Division. They had to reconcile themselves to the poor pay and prospects in the general category of work for which they had been recruited. The social status (measured by parental occupation) of those who entered the Service in this way in 1911 seems on the whole to have been higher than that of the men becoming Second Division Clerks, but a good deal lower than that of successful Class 1 examination candidates. Only about a tenth of them, for instance, were clearly the daughters of professional men; while at the opposite end of the scale about 8% were definitely of working-class origin. A fifth were the children of unspecified types of civil servant, and a further fifth the daughters of merchants, shopkeepers, commercial travellers or agents.¹

Next in order of time came the gradual provision of a small number of openings for women inspectors, beginning with Mrs. Nassau Senior's appointment in the Local Government Board in 1873. The first woman inspector of schools was appointed ten years

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later, and by 1905 the Board of Education had a Chief Woman Inspector whose staff a few years later comprised 27 other women inspectors. These women were specially selected because their education and experience fitted them for posts of this type. The work they were required to do was almost invariably concerned with women and children rather than men. They were specialists, and not normally regarded as freely interchangeable with men even within the inspectorates to which they were attached. The same was broadly true of the women factory inspectors who began to be recruited by the Home Office in 1893, and of the first women employed by that Department to inspect reformatory schools and prisons some years later. Other jobs for which women were being recruited in the 1890s included investigators for women's industries in the Board of Trade. When one of these, Miss Collet, was in 1903 made Senior Investigator she was 'the first woman to be appointed to an important inside post of an administrative character'.²

This, then, was how matters stood when the deliberations of the MacDonnell Commission began. There were hardly any administrative posts held by women, and women employed in clerical work or as specialists doing the work of inspectors of various kinds had no promotion opportunities beyond the limits of these particular fields. It was only to be expected that this lack of a Service promotion ladder would be raised by witnesses representing those affected. Miss Charlesworth, for instance, speaking for the typists, claimed that girls and women taken on for this type of work should have the same avenues of promotion theoretically open to them as Boy Clerks, i.e. right up to Class 1.³ A witness with wide outside experience thought that, if better prospects were held out, the social class of women seeking employment in Government offices would improve.⁴ When Miss Cale, representing the Post Office women clerks, announced that the members of her Association wished to sweep away the sex disability entirely, however, the Chairman could restrain himself no longer. 'If you were to limit your claim to the employment of women in matters which bring them into contact with women and children, with their own sex . . . I would say that your claim deserved careful consideration. But, expressing merely my personal opinion, I would hesitate to accept a general claim such as you have made on behalf of women.'⁵ It emerged in the course of the subsequent discussion

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that the women whom Miss Cale represented were not even eligible for promotion to the Second Division. Lord MacDonnell, however, was more concerned to expose the absurdity of the claim that women should be promoted to the highest posts in the Service. Such officers have 'to issue orders or advise on orders which affect great sections of the English working classes; they have carefully to weigh and judge the temper of those classes, who will be affected by these orders. Do you think that a woman would know, as well as a man does, or could make allowance for, the temper of such classes?'⁶

More modest claims were advanced by those speaking on behalf of a hurriedly-assembled council of representative women; women should be eligible for First Division Clerkships in *suitable* offices.⁷ The Commissioners were more likely, however, to listen to an experienced administrator such as Viscount Haldane. 'There are certainly a great many positions in the Civil Service which women can fill quite as well as men. . . . Higher Division posts as well as others.'⁸ The experiment should, however, not include his own Department, for in the War Office, Higher Division clerks had to negotiate with officers all day. This was merely one of the practical difficulties to which the Commission's attention was drawn. If the Class I examination were thrown open to women, there was the horrifying possibility that, in the words of Mr. Matheson, 'if a woman qualified for a post she would be sent to a Government Department whether the Government Department wished for her or no'.⁹

In view of all these doubts and difficulties, it was only to be expected that both the Majority and Minority Reports would recommend nothing more than a cautious extension of existing policy. Women could be employed in administrative work, but there should be three safeguards: only exceptionally qualified women were to be eligible, special selection arrangements ought to be used, and this should only be done in certain Departments. Six of the Commissioners were, however, prepared to go a little further; they signed a reservation suggesting that the Class I competition should be thrown open to women, and a limited number of junior administrative posts assigned to successful women competitors.

It was, of course, the 1914-18 war that brought matters to a

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head. Under the pressure of war needs, administrative duties were often entrusted to women whose official functions were inspectorial or advisory; university graduates were taken on as temporary administrative assistants; and in at least one case a woman was given the title of Assistant Secretary. After the war, widely-varying figures were quoted of the number of women who had actually been engaged on strictly administrative work; but whatever the doubts about its true extent, the barriers that had been temporarily and partially removed could not, in post-1918 Britain, be reimposed. For a time there was, however, considerable confusion regarding the nature and extent of the disabilities to which women would still be subject in recruitment to, and tenure of, administrative posts in the Service. Committees concerned with different aspects of the matter made mutually inconsistent recommendations. The Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act of 1919 seemed to sweep away all restrictions, but it was soon clear that everything would depend on the form in which these general principles were applied to particular branches of the Service by regulations. The House of Commons Resolution of 19th May 1920 apparently foreshadowed equal employment opportunities and equal pay for women in the Civil Service. In its practical results the Resolution of 5th August 1921 proved, however, to be more important. This approved temporary regulations under which a woman over 22 might apply for a post in the Administrative Class, provided she had served for a year in a Department or in one of the Women's Services; as a result of the simple qualifying examination and interview subsequently held, three women were given such appointments. The Resolution, however, laid it down that these temporary arrangements should only last three years, after which women should be admitted on the same terms as men. When effective open competition was resumed in 1925, therefore, women were eligible to compete.

The position as it stood when the Tomlin Commission's investigations began hardly justified the high hopes of the immediate post-war period. In the whole Administrative Class there were only twenty women, or about 2% of the total. Five of these had entered by open competition, three by the special competition mentioned above, the remaining twelve had found their way into the Administrative Class from other branches of the Service. Of

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these twelve, two had risen to ranks equivalent to Principal Assistant Secretary, and one to Assistant Secretary level. They were the Hon. Dame Maude Lawrence, Chief Woman Inspector at the Board of Education when Sir Robert Morant was President, and now Director of Women Establishments at the Treasury; Miss Muriel Ritson, brought into the Scottish Board of Health in 1919 after being secretary of the Women's Friendly Society of Scotland; and Miss Frances Durham, who had previously been Chief Woman Inspector, Employment Department, Board of Trade.¹⁰

Why had more women not been appointed as a result of open competition since 1925? In attempting to answer this question, a good deal of light can be thrown on the practical disabilities to which women were still subject in the Administrative Class. The facts to be explained do not, of course, relate merely to the first few years of the resumed open competition. Over the whole period 1925-39 inclusive, out of some 490 competition appointments, only 35, or 7%, were given to women.

(1) The first possibility is that the women were not, academically or as interviewees, of the same quality as the men. The First Civil Service Commissioner drew the attention of the Tomlin Commission to the low quality of Administrative Class entrants who were women. In the period 1925-9, the proportion of first class honours graduates had been 75% amongst the successful men, and only 33% amongst the successful women.¹¹ Miss Martindale, however, points out that 'in 1937, on the written test alone, two of the women would have taken first and second places, and another woman the fourth place; they lost, however, on the interview'.¹² An analysis of *all* candidates in the 1938 competition undertaken as part of the present study showed that, while women scored significantly lower marks than men in the written part of the examination, there was no significant difference between their mean marks for the interview. Comparing the earlier and later years of the competition, there was an important change in the chance of success of women candidates compared with men; for while in the first five years women were only half as successful as men, in proportion to their numbers, in obtaining home administrative appointments, by the end of the period there was comparatively little difference between the sexes in this respect. Speaking very generally, then, the problem seems to have become

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one of quantity rather than quality. Why did so few women become candidates for the open competition that they came to form such a small proportion of competition entrants?

(2) Mrs. Hubback provided one very pertinent answer to this question. It was because the best women would not enter a profession with a marriage bar.¹³ How had such a bar come to be applied, and how effective was it in practice? Its legal basis during the inter-war period was that, by Regulations of 26th August 1921, it was laid down that all female candidates for established posts should be unmarried or widowed, and that women holding such posts should be required to resign on marriage. Exceptions might, however, be made on the recommendation of the Head of a Department and with the approval of the Treasury. In the Tomlin Commission's view, this discretionary power could most appropriately be used in the case of higher administrative staff; a few years later another Committee,¹⁴ in supporting this recommendation, added the case where the special requirements of the Department might make its use desirable. In practice, it was not until 1938 that a single case occurred of a woman administrator being retained despite her marriage.¹⁵ Undoubtedly it would have been better to exempt all higher administrative work from the operation of the marriage bar. As it was, its existence acted as a powerful deterrent when women were considering the possibility of taking the open competition, besides resulting in the loss of the services of an unknown proportion of the 15 women who entered by competitions between 1925 and 1939 and subsequently resigned on marriage.

(3) Another reason advanced for the small number of women who become candidates for entry to the Administrative Class was put forward by Miss Jebb, Principal of Bedford College. It was the inability or unwillingness of women to delay their preparation for another career (usually teaching) on the very uncertain chance of success in a highly competitive examination for a small number of vacancies. For although in one sense this was equally applicable to men, the latter had a second string to their bow in that the same examination was used for vacancies in the Indian Civil Service and for appointing to Eastern Cadetships.¹⁶ It was not only that women were excluded from these overseas vacancies filled from the same examination; for even within the Home Administrative Class,

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women were not eligible to be appointed to the whole range of available posts. The position in December 1930 was that they were excluded from posts in offices dealing with defence and overseas territories.¹⁷ In the Defence Departments and the Colonial, Dominions and India Offices, the appointment of women to posts in the Administrative Class was regarded as 'inadvisable'; in addition, four Assistant Secretary posts in the Cabinet Offices were filled by uniform personnel. The Mines Department also thought it inadvisable to have women on the administrative staff. In the case of the Export Credits Guarantee Department, the reason for excluding them was that 'having regard to normal commercial practice and prejudices, the employment of women would not be in the best interests of the work'.¹⁸ When pressed as to why there was a ban on women administrators, representatives of offices dealing with defence and overseas affairs usually attempted to justify it on one of two grounds. Either the occupants of such posts came in close contact with uniform personnel, or they had a liability to serve at an overseas station. Another favourite reason advanced by Departments concerned with home affairs (though this was not used in the case of administrative staff) was that the work involved travelling and over-night absences of two or more officers.

(4) Apart from actual exclusion from administrative posts in certain Services and Departments, women were often made to feel that a prejudice against their sex existed, and this must have influenced potential candidates for the open competition. There was, for example, the extraordinary statement of a First Civil Service Commissioner (Leathes). 'I cannot tell whether, under combined open competitive examination, women will get more than their share or less than their share of appointments. I cannot tell whether, under open competition, the right women or the wrong women will be selected. I am afraid it might turn out to be the latter.'¹⁹ Coming from such a source, this was discouraging, to say the least. Nor was the patronizing tone of his successor (Meiklejohn) particularly appropriate. He was asked how the women candidates fared at the interview. 'The better ones do quite well. We have not had any great fliers amongst the women; but we have had several very nice women; very good candidates.'²⁰ Where a woman succeeded in the open competition, and was then allocated

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to a Department which had never previously included women amongst its administrative staff, her position was often extremely uncomfortable. Instances of obstruction and prejudice to which women were subjected might be difficult to prove, but they were bound to become known to many of those who were thinking of making a career in the Civil Service. The London and National Society for Women's Service drew attention to a Board of Education case.²¹ Miss Dickson, after many years of performing the work of an Assistant Secretary at the pay and with the status of an inspector, was eventually recognized as an Assistant Secretary in 1920. On her death two years later the post remained vacant for two years and was then filled by a man. 'The women inspectors do not appear to have been considered for promotion to the post.'

(5) The fact that promises of equal pay had not been honoured was also highly discouraging to would-be entrants, though the starting salary for Assistant Principals was the same for both women and men. Nor could they even be certain of the precise extent of this disability if they should ever succeed in reaching the highest ranks in the Administrative Class. For whether by accident or design, no salary figure appropriate to women was given in published sources for any rank beyond Assistant Secretary (isolated cases of higher rank had 'personal' salaries). This might even have led some candidates to the pessimistic conclusion that there was no intention of promoting women to these posts at all.

(6) Teaching had for a long time been the main profession to which women with a university training aspired, and many of them felt at least morally bound to keep to their original plan because of help received from public funds with this end in view. Moreover, the possibility of taking the Administrative Class examination was even less widely known amongst women than it was amongst men at the outlying universities.

These, then, were some of the reasons for the disappointingly small number of women who entered the Administrative Class by open competition. Even by 1938, women only formed 13% of the candidates submitting themselves for examination with a view to the award of junior home administrative posts. The extent to which women were promoted from the lower ranks and transferred from other branches of the Service was also disappointingly small. In 1939 there were only 43 women in the Administrative

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Class, or not much more than 3% of the total. Thirty of them were open competition entrants since 1925, of whom only eight had so far risen to the rank of Principal. Three were the successful candidates at the special competition of 1922-3. The remaining ten had either been given administrative appointments after previously holding specialist or Executive Class posts in the Civil Service, or had been brought in direct from outside without examination. Whereas there were three women of Assistant Secretary rank and above, as we have seen, in 1929, there were still only three in 1939, and only one of these had risen higher than Assistant Secretary. That was Miss Muriel Ritson, still in the Department of Health for Scotland,²² the others being Miss Power, previously an Investigator under the Trade Board Acts and now at the Ministry of Labour, and Miss Myra Curtis, first of the three women who had entered the Administrative Class after previous Government Service by the special competition of 1922-3.

The 1939-45 war, for obvious reasons, led to a greatly increased employment of women in administrative as in other work. Although the proportion of women in the Administrative Class was therefore greater in 1950 than it had been before the war, it only amounted to less than 7% of the total. Amongst higher administrative staff there were 29 women, or less than 3% of all such staff. Although the numbers are too small to be statistically significant, it is of some interest to analyse these 29 cases in terms of the routes of entry, universities and Departments of the people concerned. One of them had reached Deputy Secretary rank,²³ five were Under Secretaries or Principal Assistant Secretaries, and the remainder were Assistant Secretaries. The 29 women came into the Civil Service by three routes of roughly equal numerical importance. Ten were open competition entrants who were successful in the competitions of the period 1925-39. Ten had been established civil servants in other classes who had entered the Administrative Class before 1939; all but three of them had been at a university before joining the Civil Service, and most had been originally taken on as specialists (inspectors or investigators of various kinds). The remaining nine were wartime entrants, all but one of whom had been at a university. The universities concerned were Oxford in eleven cases (including one instance of Oxford and

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London), Cambridge in seven (including two instances of Cambridge and London), London alone in five, Birmingham in one, and Aberdeen in one case. Five Departments (Home Office, Board of Trade, Labour, Supply, Town and Country Planning) each had three of these higher civil servants; no other Department had more than two.

Do the competition figures in recent years suggest that the unwillingness of women to compete for entry has been overcome, and that we may expect them in future to form a substantially higher proportion of the Administrative Class than 7%? The marriage bar was finally removed on 15th October 1946; and sufficient time has elapsed since women first took part in open competitions in 1925 to make it much less likely that many potential candidates are unaware of the possibilities open to them. Moreover, although equal pay has not yet been conceded, Assistant Principals still start at the same salary regardless of sex; and since Dame Evelyn Sharp became the first woman Deputy Secretary, men's and women's salaries for the two top ranks of the hierarchy have been made identical.

The competitions of the reconstruction period seemed to foreshadow an increased tendency for women to enter the Administrative Class. In the open competitions, 19% of those who competed were women, who formed 16% of those subsequently taking up appointments. Even in the competitions limited to those who already held established Civil Service posts, 13% of the competitors were women; but in this case they only formed 5% of those taking up administrative appointments. When normal open competition was resumed, the proportion of women competing remained much higher than it had been before the war; in the three-year period 1949-51, 23% of the candidates were women. The proportion of women amongst candidates declared successful, however, was less than half this figure (11%). This significant difference may have been due to their obtaining a lower average mark for written work (as was found in our 1938 analysis), or to a poorer average interview mark (which was not true of 1938). The whole question of their relative lack of success in current competitions should certainly be investigated; it was not found practicable to do so as part of the present study.

The increased willingness of women since the war to submit

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themselves to examination with a view to entering the Administrative Class has, because of their relative lack of success in the normal post-war competitions, brought about little change in the proportion of women within that class. Promotion to the junior rank by way of limited competition seems likely to have even less influence. During the same three-year period, 1949-51, only 8% of the candidates examined were women, and they only formed 4% of those declared successful. If the proportion of women in the Higher Administrative Class is not to remain stationary or decline in the near future, therefore, the proportion of women amongst those given the rank of Principal or above as the result of promotion from the Executive Classes or transfer from other branches will have to be greater than it has been in the past. The only other possibility, apart from a review of the open competition to discover why so many women were unsuccessful, would be to take on more women with suitable qualifications and experience as direct entrants without examination or by special competition. Professor Ernest Barker made such a suggestion as long ago as 1936, and it has often been repeated since then. His plan was to recruit, by selection up to the age of 30 or so, post-graduate people who had had a period of actual social or public work which enriched and completed their training.²⁴ Something on these lines might give women 'a new incentive to compete for entry into the administrative service of the State, in which their gifts and their presence are needed'.²⁵

CHAPTER TEN

THE NATURE OF THE PROFESSION

MOST professional groups have, during one phase of their development, become aware of the need to secure greater public recognition, prestige and status. The group with which we are concerned can be regarded as having become a profession by virtue of the situation created by the Order in Council of 4th June 1870. 'Public opinion did not grant professional status to the civil service until a system of testing for competence was at work.'¹ Moreover, the new system of recruitment 'provided a great bond of unity between the staffs in the different Departments; the bond of having entered by the same gate and of being of the same vintage, or perhaps a year more or less in bottle than Smith of the Department across the road'.² Not only had they entered by the same gate; they also came from the same relatively narrow range of social strata, of schools and universities. Their pre-entry training may not have been specialized, as it was for some of the other professions, but it was certainly 'intellectual, prolonged, and based on the exploration of recognized fields of study'.³ And the legal limitations under which they had to exercise their talents provided an excellent basis on which to erect a code of professional conduct.⁴ In addition to all this, the transfers between Departments, and the growing inter-dependence between the activities of different Ministries that developed later on, still further emphasized the unity of the Service.

The British case is in striking contrast to that of Federal administrators in the United States, who are still, it is said, not accepted as professionals. The reasons for this difference confirm the importance of the factors we have just discussed; for it seems

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to have been the absence of these favourable elements that has delayed the professionalization of Federal administrators. In their case there has been marked diversity of social origin and educational background. Instead of a career-service mainly recruited by a standard selection procedure on completing a University education, there have been informal methods of selection, widely varying ages of entry, and insecurity of tenure. Very many of those recruited have already been in other professions, and tend to identify themselves with these organized groups outside the Service. It is not surprising that there has so far failed to develop among them 'the social cohesion and common outlook which has characterized, for example, the higher civil service in England or in pre-Hitler Germany'.⁵

This acquisition of professional status, whereby the Home Civil Service became an acceptable and attainable alternative career to the Church or the Law for those with the right kind of education and intellectual capacity, was not due to a skilfully-conducted campaign by an organization representing the officials themselves. It took place long before any such organization existed; for the First Division Association did not come into being until December 1918. Apart from having been started at such an advanced stage in the profession's development, this organization has another unusual feature. For as a man rises to the top of this profession he often tends to resign from the Association. This is because, at this stage of his career, he is likely to have to represent the interests of the State in its capacity as employer, and to sit on the other side of the table from his First Division Association colleagues and other staff representatives at National and Departmental Whitley Council meetings.⁶

In addition to organizations to improve the remuneration and working conditions of their members, most professions have a forum for the discussion and study of the particular technique or science which they practise. Here, too, members of the profession with which we are concerned apparently felt no need for anything of the kind until, in the early 1920s, 'a little group of Civil Servants got together and determined to form the Institute of Public Administration, which should be both the means of discussing the nature of their art among Civil Servants, and a means of providing the same help to the organised community in the way of ideas

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and authoritative experience which is provided by the learned Societies in other sciences'.⁷

Though worries about the status and prestige of the profession were late in developing, they were given public expression in the late 1920s. Was it an accident that this was also the time when the combined effect of post-war reconstruction recruitment arrangements and the pursuit of a limited policy of promotion from the ranks had brought into the Administrative Class a small proportion of people of lower intellectual and social status? In the evidence submitted to the Tomlin Commission by the First Division Association, stress was laid on the rival attractions of a business career as one of the main factors in lowering the prestige of the Service. It was pointed out that the Home Civil Service had, in the nineteenth century, been one of a small number of professions regarded as suitable for men of a certain social standing, while business employment was not so regarded. Now, however, this situation had changed in two respects. First, the old social prejudice against business as a career had disappeared. Secondly, the prestige of the Service had declined, as it had been brought more directly under the public eye and had become the subject of incessant attacks 'by sections of the Press and by certain public writers'.⁸ As there seemed no possibility of restoring the remoteness from the ordinary life of the community that had formerly lent dignity to the profession, the suggested solution was an improvement in salaries; this would at least ensure that not all the best products of Oxford and Cambridge went into business. Leaving aside for the moment the suggested solution, the diagnosis may not have been complete. For apart from the prestige repercussions of the dilution of the Administrative Class mentioned earlier, there are several other possible contributory factors. In the eyes of a better-educated public, practitioners of so intangible an art as administration were unlikely to be accorded the recognition freely given to medical men, scientists and engineers. Even in sport, the supremacy of the amateur was no longer unchallenged. And the social classes from which the bulk of the senior administrators were still drawn no longer had, in post-1918 Britain, the same deference shown to them by those lower in the social hierarchy as had been customary half a century earlier. Honours continued, of course, to be bestowed on them from above. The Permanent Head of a

Department could still normally expect a knighthood before he retired, even if he was only receiving the salary of a Deputy Secretary; anyone of the rank of Assistant Secretary or above could appropriately be made a Companion of one of the various Orders, so that his status was recognized as at least equivalent to that of a colonel in the army. It is doubtful, however, whether all this meant very much to the ordinary citizen, who was probably unaware of the significant status differences between a C.B.E., an O.B.E. and an M.B.E. Whatever it might mean when a higher civil servant was included in the Birthday Honours List, it clearly did not represent popular affection, or world renown, but was perhaps analogous to the 'political and public services' that were rewarded in the case of those about whom nothing more precise could be said. The man in the street probably treated with the same amused or cynical indifference the item in his evening paper recording the latest agreement on the furnishings appropriate to the dignitaries at different levels of the hierarchy, whereby Deputy Secretaries are entitled to Wilton carpets and walnut furniture, while Under-Secretaries must only have mahogany.⁹

Whether the public esteem in which the profession is held has shown a downward secular trend or not, we have it on good authority that in 1939 nearly all the chiefs of the Civil Service were 'to be ranked with the upper and upper-middle classes by the mode of life which they practise and the society which they keep, though many of them did not by origin belong to those classes'.¹⁰ More than three-quarters of the Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries belonged to one (rarely to two) of six of the great clubs of high status and considerable luxury within easy reach of Whitehall—the Athenaeum, the Travellers', the Reform, the Union, the United University, and the Oxford and Cambridge.¹¹ 'It is a fair presumption that a civil servant who joins such an institution ranks himself socially with the opulent classes of the community, if he does not belong to them by origin. The figures . . . suggest that nothing like three out of every four high permanent officials belong by origin to those classes. It follows that a large proportion of the Higher Civil Service, having gained by their talent a right to enter a social class above that to which they were born, have more or less deliberately exercised the right.'¹² That was the pre-war position. Of the Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries of 1950, over

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four-fifths were stated in their *Who's Who* biographies to be members of one or more London clubs; and of these club members, 70% belonged to one or other of five which were, in order of popularity, the Oxford and Cambridge, the Union, the United University, the Reform and the Athenaeum. The *Who's Who* coverage of those of lower rank is insufficient to enable us to analyse club membership for the Higher Civil Service as a whole.

Although the British setting differs from the American where, we are told, 'monetary incentives have traditionally been regarded as decisive, and the salary level attained by an individual has been viewed by himself and by his associates as the index of his social status', nevertheless the question of salary cannot be ignored in any discussion of the status of this British profession.¹³ If we confine our attention in the first instance to Heads of Departments, we find that the Under-Secretary of State at the Home Office had a salary of £2,000 in the 1850s. This was still £2,000 in the 1870s, and had risen to £3,000 by the 1920s and 1930s, and £4,500 by the 1950s, a rise of 125% in a century. Over the same period the average level of retail prices probably increased by nearly 300%, so that apart altogether from the influence of such factors as the introduction of steeply progressive direct taxation, the economic position of such a higher civil servant has shown a marked decline in real terms. We are often reminded, however, that what matters most to the individual is whether he has maintained his position relative to those at roughly the same social and economic level as himself. As no mean figure of comparable salaries covering anything like a century is available, the data given in Table 27 were obtained from the present holders of the appointments mentioned or from published sources. These posts were selected because they fulfilled certain conditions necessary to form a basis for comparison with the headships of Government Departments. First, they existed in 1871, and still exist. Secondly, they were relatively senior salaried posts in their respective professions, with similar security of tenure to Civil Service appointments. Thirdly, they were normally filled by university-trained men. Fourthly, except in the education cases, the salaries were roughly the same as those of the chosen higher civil servants at one or more of the selected dates.

What conclusions can be drawn from this Table? First, it is clear

TABLE 27

SALARIES OF THOSE OCCUPYING CERTAIN CIVIL SERVICE AND OTHER POSTS AT VARIOUS DATES FROM 1871 TO 1954

	1871	1878	1888	1912	1929	1939	1954
<i>Civil Service:</i>							
Permanent Under-Secretary, Home Office	Salary Index	£2,000 100	£2,000 100	£2,000 100	£3,000 150	£3,000 150	£4,500 225
Permanent Secretary, Board of Trade	Salary Index	£1,500 100	£1,800 120	£2,000 133	£3,000 200	£3,000 200	£4,500 300
<i>Law and Local Government:</i>							
Recorder, City of London	Salary Index	£3,000 100	£3,500 117	£4,000 133	£4,000 133	£4,000 133	£4,000 133
Common Serjeant, City of London	Salary Index	£2,050 100	£2,250 110	£3,000 146	£3,000 146	£3,000 146	£3,500 171
County Court Judge, Clerkenwell	Salary Index	£1,500 100	£1,500 100	£1,500 100	£1,500 100	£2,000 133	£2,800 187
Master in Lunacy	Salary Index	£2,000 100	£2,000 100	£2,000 100	£2,000 100	£2,200 110	£2,850 142
Town Clerk, City of London	Salary Index	£1,500 100	£2,000 133	£2,500 166	£3,500 233	£2,500 166	£3,750 250
Town Clerk, Liverpool	Salary Index	£2,000 100	£2,500 125	£2,200 80	£3,300 165	£3,300 165	£5,000 250
<i>Education:</i>							
Professor of Moral Philosophy, Edinburgh University	Salary Index	£502* 100	£502* 100	£900 179	£1,300 259	£1,300 259	£2,100 418
Headmaster, City of London School	Salary Index	£1,000 100	£1,250 125	£1,000 100	£1,750 175	£2,250 225	£2,500 250
<i>Church of England:</i>							
Dean of Durham	Salary Index	£3,000 100	£3,000 100	£3,000 100	£3,000 100	£3,000 100	£3,000 100

* Including estimated class fees from students.

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that the increase in salary of a Departmental Head, comparing 1954 with 1871, has been amongst the highest of the cases included in the Table, only exceeded by a Professor of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh University, and roughly equal to those of the Town Clerks and Headmaster listed. Secondly, most of the instances where the increase of salary has been markedly *less* than this are variants of the special case of judges, where it is now generally admitted that, from the High Court downwards, there has been a serious failure to adapt pay to the changing value of money. In the light of this, the higher civil servant has probably no more than kept pace in salary with his counterparts in other professions.

The relative remuneration of senior civil servants and those in other walks of life was hotly debated in the middle of the nineteenth century. The cost-of-living had fallen, and there was talk of the spectacular economies to be achieved by reducing the excessive pay of civil servants. To provide himself with ammunition to counter these suggestions, Sir Charles Trevelyan obtained figures of salaries being paid in roughly comparable employments inside and outside the Service.¹⁴ He discovered, for example, that while the pay of the Under-Secretary of State at the Home Office was £2,000 and of the Joint Secretaries at the Board of Trade £1,500 each, the following salaries were being paid to the most senior permanent officials—the secretaries—of these outside undertakings, amongst others:

East India Company: £2,400 and a house.

Trinity House: £1,800.

London Dock Company: £1,500 and a house.

Royal Exchange Insurance Company: £1,500.

North-Western Railway: £1,500.

Lloyd's: £1,000 and a house.

These figures seemed to be broadly in line with those inside the Service. When one went beyond the bare salary, and took account of other factors, however, the position was much less favourable. 'Persons in the permanent service of the Government are precluded from receiving fees on their own behalf; no pensions are allowed to their widows and orphans . . . a large deduction is made from their salaries to form a fund for defraying the cost of the pensions to which they become entitled when they are worn out; and they are strictly prohibited from engaging in any trade or other business

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independent of their official duties.' All this was in striking contrast to the bonuses and gratuities, houses to reside in (with coals and candles), percentage on profits, retiring allowances and pensions, to which many of those in corresponding outside employment were entitled, not to mention the permission to practise and the prospect of becoming partners that sweetened the lives of others.

When the Tomlin Commission reviewed the position some eighty years later, the First Division Association produced evidence that solicitors and doctors comparable in ability with their Administrative Class counterparts were earning at least £2,000 a year by the time they were 40, as against an Assistant Secretary's salary scale (with bonus) of £1,200 to £1,400.¹⁵ Even more unfavourable comparisons were drawn between the civil servant's pay and the rewards of those in finance, trade and industry. Remuneration in the local government services was also examined. The London County Council had recently fixed the salaries of many of the chief officers. The Clerk of the Council and most Heads of Departments were paid £3,000, which was also the basic salary of a Permanent Secretary in the Civil Service. The First Division Association contended that the £3,000 paid by the London County Council to the Education Officer ought, on the basis of functions and responsibilities, to be compared with the remuneration of a Principal Assistant Secretary of the Board of Education (salary with bonus, £1,400-£1,690). Several members of the Tomlin Commission clearly disagreed with this view, and the recommendations of the Commission implied that, in the main, there was a 'fair relativity' between salaries in the Administrative Class and in outside employment.

Between the 1930s and the post-war period, salaries of higher civil servants undoubtedly lagged behind those in many other occupations; once the changes recommended by the Chorley Committee in 1949 were made, however, their relative position was substantially re-established. By that time, certain new elements had been introduced into the discussion. First, 'the greatly increased responsibilities which have devolved on Heads of Departments during the past twenty-five years' were held to justify salary increases.¹⁶ To this the Chorley Committee added the related point that 'the days when senior civil servants of the Administrative Class had leisure to engage in literature or the arts

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as spare-time occupations' were long past; this reduction of professional amenities called for compensating improvements in pay.¹⁷ Secondly, the Chairman and full-time members of many of the recently established public service corporations such as the National Coal Board, the Steel Board, the British Electricity Authority and others, had been allotted salaries of between £5,000 and £8,500. When Permanent Secretaries were only being paid £3,500 it was difficult to justify the wide difference, particularly as some of their colleagues had left the Service to take over these posts; even the Chorley increase to £4,500 did not completely close the gap.

One difficulty that exists in assessing what change is needed in the remuneration of Permanent Secretaries so that their relative position in the general economic scale shall be maintained, is that there are hardly enough salaries at this level to establish an appropriate hierarchy for comparison. For those of slightly lower rank this can, however, be done. Thus Professor R. G. D. Allen, in support of the First Division Association's claim before the Civil Service Arbitration Tribunal for increased pay for male Principals in 1953, estimated what salary increase would keep the Principal in line with his pre-war Jones in the economic scale. In his view, the appropriate increase in the 1938 salary of someone receiving between £800 and £1,100 at that time was, on the most likely assumptions, more than 100% by 1953. In fact, the starting salary of male Principals was, after the award, only increased to £1,150 or 44% above its 1938 level. On the same assumptions, a male Assistant Secretary's salary should have increased by between 90% and 100% over the same period, but in fact the starting salary of that grade only rose by 39%.

Within the Administrative Class, as can be seen from Table 28, there has been, over the period 1939-54, the usual reduction of the differential between better paid work and lower paid work. Thus while the Assistant Principal's starting salary has risen by 71%, the extent of the increase becomes progressively smaller for the higher ranks, reaching a minimum of 32% for Under-Secretaries. For still more senior posts the salary increases range from 43% to 50%; but for the complicating factor of high rates of pay in the new public service corporations, it seems highly probable that the narrowing of the differential would have been correspondingly

TABLE 28

BASIC ADMINISTRATIVE CLASS SALARIES AS GIVEN IN THE BRITISH IMPERIAL CALENDAR
1929, 1939, 1950, 1954

	1929	1939	1950	1954 *	Percentage increase in Minimum Basic Salary since 1939
Secretary of the Treasury and Head of Civil Service	£3,500	£3,500	£3,750	£5,000	43
Secretary (Head of a Major Department)	£3,000	£3,000	£3,500	£4,500	50
D.S.: Men	£2,200	£2,200	£2,500	£3,250	48
Women	No women of this rank	No women of this rank	£2,500	£3,250	
U.S.: Men	Rank not yet in existence	£1,900	£2,000	£2,500	32
Women		No women of this rank	£1,825	£2,325	
P.A.S.: Men	£1,200-1,500	£1,450-1,650	£1,800 †	Rank no longer in existence	
Women	£1,200 ‡	£1,400 ‡	£1,625 ‡		
A.S.: Men	£1,000-1,200	£1,150-1,450	£1,320-1,700	£1,600-2,100	39
Women	£850-1,000	£1,000-1,275	£1,160-1,550	£1,440-1,950	44
P.: Men	£700-900	£800-1,100	£950-1,250	£1,150-1,570	44
Women	£600-750	£700-940	£830-1,075	£1,025-1,395	46
A.P.: Men	£200-500	£275-625	£400-750	£470-855	71
Women	£200-400	£275-510	£400-650	£470-760	71

* These salaries include 'Pay Addition' where appropriate, as well as the 1953 arbitration awards and consequential adjustments.

† Strictly speaking this rank was abolished in 1945-6, but isolated instances remained.

‡ In these cases the women were not described as being of this rank, but their salaries indicate that this was, in effect, their position in the hierarchy.

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marked in these cases also.¹⁸ It will be interesting to see whether the Priestley Commission recommends any modification of the present hierarchy of salaries for the Administrative Class.

The general conclusion to which we are led is, therefore, as follows. The salary of a Permanent Secretary has declined substantially, measured in real terms, over the last century. Relative to the senior salaried members of other professions, however, the Head of a Department has probably maintained his position since the 1870s, though his pay has not yet been brought fully into line with that of newly-created posts of similar responsibility in Government-sponsored undertakings. The economic position of Under-Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries (as well as Principals) has probably worsened over the period since 1938 relative to their equivalents in the income-tax paying hierarchy, quite apart from the narrowing of the salary differential between these and the lower ranks of the Administrative Class. Some of the professional amenities of the Service, notably in respect of leisure, have been drastically reduced; though this has sometimes been partially compensated by special pay additions.¹⁹ The non-contributory pensions and practically complete security of tenure of higher civil servants make some comparisons with outside employment difficult. Moreover, it has to be remembered that the average time taken to reach particular ranks has fallen very substantially in recent years, as will be shown below. For a long time the grade of Assistant Secretary has represented the normal prospect for direct entrants, so that the pay of this rank and the time taken to reach it represent the career-expectation of the university man or woman who is weighing-up the relative financial advantages of this as compared with other occupations.²⁰ Civil Service Commissioners have recently stressed the very great attractions of the top of the Assistant Secretary's scale. 'No other career offers a 90% chance of £2,000 (as assistant secretary) at age 40 plus.'²¹

The stereotype of the civil servant as someone whose working day is spent in drinking innumerable cups of tea, issuing forms that he himself cannot understand, writing letters in a jargon of his own, refusing to commit himself or accept responsibility, and passing every possible problem to another official or another Department, has reference to those classes of the Service with

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which the public normally has dealings. The ordinary citizen can hardly be expected to have any clear mental picture of the *higher* civil servant. Even the Administrative Class as a whole forms less than 1% of the Service, and the public at large is unlikely to come into personal contact with any member of it. A recent letter in the *Radio Times*, in which it was facetiously suggested that the Third Programme should have its own 'family serial', proposed that the father should be a higher civil servant 'whose main passions are classical music and ancient history'.²² Nevertheless, senior officials also have their public, which includes Members of Parliament, people in other walks of life who have held temporary but responsible posts in the Service, senior officers of the local government service and local councillors. Each Department has its own 'public' of specialists whose interests bring them into touch with a particular branch of Government activity; sometimes a voluntary association may have as one of its main functions the exercise of constant vigilance in relation to a Department's work. From contacts with this more limited public there has emerged a stereotype of the senior administrator.²³ Despite certain superficial similarities with the popular mental picture of the ordinary civil servant, the contrasts are even more striking. The high-ranking official is known to be anything but a clock-watcher; the joke about the fountains in Trafalgar Square has long ceased to be applicable to him.²⁴ Unlike the lack of interest in their work and surly manner supposed to characterize those civil servants with whom the ordinary citizen has direct dealings, the men with whom we are concerned are usually found to be both charming and helpful.

What, then, is the prevailing view regarding the characteristics of higher civil servants? Amongst those who claim to know something about their temper and outlook, there is a high degree of unanimity regarding the main virtues and failings that they exhibit. They are praised for their incorruptibility, their willingness to subordinate personal interest to that of the Service, their loyalty to Ministers, their conscientiousness and industry, their tact, personal charm and literary facility. Their general level of intelligence is admitted to be high. They are criticized for being cautious, for lack of drive and personal vitality, for having a negative attitude of mind, for smugness and

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complacency, for being out of touch with working-class problems and ignorant of recent advances in both the natural and the social sciences.²⁵

This is a formidable indictment. These characteristics are said to have been particularly prevalent amongst all but the most recent open competition entrants; rankers, and those entering by other routes, have adapted themselves to the prevailing pattern. If we look at the education and career of the typical open competition entrant of the past, it is not difficult to distinguish a large number of features likely to foster the development of qualities of the kind described. His father, in all but 10% of the cases, was not a manual worker; but he is equally unlikely to have been a wealthy man. A middle or upper-middle class upbringing was combined with an education in which, at every stage, there were examination hurdles that had to be cleared if one was not to fall out of the race for a safe and respectable career. So there would seem to have been three elements involved at the pre-entry stage. First, 'what is wrong . . . with the Civil Service is something that is wrong with the middle class and its nineteenth-century standards.'²⁶ Secondly, having been overdriven in boyhood and youth, those who become higher civil servants have tended, sooner or later, to show a resulting lack of mental and nervous energy; vitality has drained from them too early. Thirdly, those who have never been accustomed to the backing of ample private means do not tend to have the self-confidence and poise that comes with the knowledge of not needing to follow a particular, or any, career.²⁷ They display 'an absence of that high courage that aristocrats possess, and adventurers are not wholly without'.²⁸ A fourth element may be added: few of those competing for entry were specialists in scientific subjects, in economics, or in the newer branches of social study.

Even before he joined the Service, therefore, a typical senior administrator probably displayed most of the characteristics that are commonly attributed to the higher civil servant in his maturity. There is little difficulty in showing that his subsequent career would be likely to accentuate many of these traits. Most observers agree that drudgery and lack of encouragement to show initiative used to be outstanding features of an Assistant Principal's life. By painful experience he would learn the importance of precedent;

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the one unforgivable sin was to do anything that might embarrass his superiors and therefore ultimately the Minister. Administration was an art, a mystery that no one without at least twenty years' service could hope even to begin to understand. As learning this art was a life's work, there was no time for serious study even of those subjects with a direct bearing on the Department's activities. Specialists were there to be called in whenever required; it was no part of the administrator's job to make himself expert in any field. As all administration was the same at the top, it was a positive handicap to specialize. Enthusiasm for any one branch of the work was undesirable; what the Service needed was all-rounders who could be transferred to other sections and other Departments at a moment's notice. 'In our system', says Sir James Grigg, 'much the most important requirement is the ability to manage men—whether they are our fellow civil servants subordinate to us or the more senior civil servants and the politicians above us or whether, again, it is the man in the street who is at once the toad under our harrow and our ultimate master.'²⁹ Personal charm, tact and tolerance are what is needed rather than a missionary zeal. The higher civil servant shows an awareness of the complexity of human affairs, of the unpredictability of the direct and indirect results of great measures of reform. Critics may say he is over-cautious; his apologists prefer to call him a realist, whose whole training and experience develop in him a great sense of responsibility, an ability not merely to distinguish what is practicable from what is not, but also to weigh the possible long-term disadvantages against the short-term attractions of giving way to pressure from powerful interests. To his defenders he is a man whose adherence to principle and striving for continuity contrasts favourably with the opportunism natural among politicians.³⁰

Some of his faults may be virtues. Others may turn out to be illusory. 'Because the Civil Service is hidden away from the limelight, a myth has grown up that its officers lead a cloistered life. No one who has had to deal regularly with civil servants will support such a legend. They tend, on the whole, to be more aware of the world outside their domains than their counterparts in business, in the universities, or in any of the professions.'³¹ Yet when allowance is made for these possibilities, there remains an impressive body of what are widely held to be defects in temper

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and attitude of mind. It is worth considering some of the measures that might improve this situation.

(1) On recruitment, the most far-reaching proposal is to make the only means of entry to the Administrative Class that of promotion from the ranks.³² As Chairman of an *ad hoc* Fabian Committee, Mr. Monck (who makes this suggestion) had some five years earlier subscribed to the view that direct entry of university-trained personnel should continue to take place, and the reason for his change of attitude is not made clear.³³ Possibly, like another recent critic, he became impatient because the effects of the improvements in the educational ladder were slow in showing themselves; 'must the working-class boy or girl wait until the educational millennium for an equal chance with middle-class children to become administrators of policies initiated by a working-class movement?'³⁴ As we have seen elsewhere in the present study, there has been an important modification of the social origin distribution of open competition entrants when the years since 1948 are compared with the period before 1939. The change has not, however, been spectacular, and there is probably still a certain amount of truth in Dr. Finer's pre-war observations. 'But it is questionable whether they can ever easily escape from the sense of superiority unconsciously assimilated in their country or suburban homes and public schools and colleges. They are too alien to their subordinates, perhaps insensitive to impressions from clever "outsiders", and not markedly ruthless in the exposure of incompetence in their own ranks. If their composition included the memory of misery, hunger, squalor, bureaucratic oppression, and economic insecurity, perhaps a quality would be added to their work in the highest situations which could not fail to impress the Minister at a loss for a policy or an argument.'³⁵ It would surely be a mistake, however, to seek to remedy this situation by cutting off the supply of direct entrants from the universities altogether. We are told that the most important difference between the type of senior official needed in the nineteenth as compared with the eighteenth century was in intellectual capacity. 'A negative Government only requires courage and consistency in its officials; but a positive Government requires a constant supply of invention and suggestion.'³⁶ If the need in the 1830s was, in Sir Henry Taylor's words, for men to devise what ought to be done, how

much the more ought the recruiting of higher civil servants in the Welfare State of the 1950s to seek to enlist men and women of the highest intellectual calibre. The primary aim of promotion from the ranks ought to be to ensure that those whose failure to go to a university was due to factors other than inability to reach the required standard should be given an opportunity to use and develop their talents to the greater benefit of the Service. In the past, as we have seen, this has also, because of inequalities of educational opportunity, been the principal agency in widening the range of social strata from which higher civil servants are drawn. In the future, this widening ought to be increasingly brought about by the improvement of the educational ladder outside the Service. It is interesting to note that, in recent discussions of the possibility of introducing an Administrative Class of the British type into the American Civil Service, it has been stressed that the recruitment of such a class predominantly from the universities would be 'wholly compatible with the spirit and traditions of an egalitarian society', but only because in the United States 'a college education is literally within reach of everyone who desires one.'³⁷

(2) More scientists, and more people trained in the newer branches of social studies, could be recruited in three ways. The open competition at present recruits comparatively few of them, and no one seems to know how the proportion might be raised. At a recent discussion under the auspices of the Institute of Public Administration, the First Commissioner said that more scientists would be welcomed in the Administrative Class, and that too few of them applied.³⁸ There could, of course, be more transfer of specialists who have shown marked administrative ability to senior posts in the Administrative Class. This is still comparatively rare, despite the view expressed by the Barlow Committee in 1945 that 'if transfers of this kind were more frequent, the business of Government might well benefit from the introduction of a different outlook. . . .'³⁹ There could also, with appropriate safeguards, be a limited pursuit of the policy of direct recruitment of men and women with this kind of training and with administrative experience outside the Service. Both these possibilities have been mentioned in earlier chapters, and no more need be said about them. It would probably be a mistake, however, to allow the present

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reaction against the disciplines which have provided the intellectual background for most of our senior administrators to blind us to the advantages that have been gained in this way. It has been said that, because they have had this kind of education, members of the Administrative Class adhere firmly to two principles. One of these is humanistic; truth can always be revealed by discussion. The other is the universalist principle: a man must be capable of understanding anything and of doing anything.⁴⁰ Some of the caution, hesitancy, and amateurishness attributed to the Higher Civil Service may, it is true, be traced to this cause. Those without this approach, however, may well err in the direction of narrowness, dogmatism, and unwillingness to admit the validity of any point of view but their own. The specialist-turned-administrator does not always prove a success, and in those countries where this is the normal route of entry to the highest appointments in the Civil Service, the need for senior officials with a general rather than a specialist training and approach is keenly felt. 'The more complex the world becomes . . . the more difficult becomes the task of synthesis. Here in America . . . our most tragic governmental inadequacies are in levels analogous to those occupied by the British administrative class.'⁴¹

(3) Apart from changes in the field of recruitment policy, it is difficult to see any practicable way in which Service conditions can be changed so substantially as to produce major modifications in the attitude of mind of senior administrators. Almost anyone who has studied the Administrative Class can, of course, suggest numerous improvements in organization. The training of Assistant Principals should be less hit-and-miss in character; it should include planned instruction, and should not be confined to headquarters or to any one branch of a Department's work. Inter-departmental transfer, periods of service in other countries and other organizations, leave of absence for study and research, have all been recommended. These and other improvements, though there are obvious limits to the extent they are likely to be applied, will serve to widen the knowledge and experience of the administrator, but they leave untouched the fundamental Service causes of hesitancy, caution, and lack of reformist zeal amongst higher civil servants. This attitude of mind tends to develop in the course of an official career because of the nature of the relationship

between the Civil Service, Ministers and Parliament, because of the size and complexity both of the tasks to be done and of the machinery for doing them. The Permanent Secretary could not, except for a brief period and by virtue of a rare combination of favourable circumstances, display the attributes of a man who has built a large business up from almost nothing. A ruthless disregard for opposition from whatever quarter, risk-taking on the grand scale, 'snap' decisions, these are the captain of industry's stock-in-trade;⁴² the senior civil servant may try to develop latent characteristics of this kind in adapting himself to wartime needs, but in peacetime it would take a very strong lead from his political masters to induce him to make the attempt. One writer complains that 'we want more people of the calibre and type of Beveridge, Arthur Salter, E. F. Wise, Sir Robert Morant, and fewer of the Horace Wilsons'.⁴³ In his view, there must be something wrong with a Service in which many of the ablest men tend to leave (though Morant, in fact, died in harness). Both Morant and Beveridge, it may be noted, reached controlling positions in the public service at a time when one of the periodic extensions of the range of Government activity was taking place. It was a time when men of drive and vision could be given a comparatively free hand to organize major new branches of work; they could virtually select their own teams of devoted henchmen who need not be, and very often were not, career civil servants of the normal type. Once the Service machine has been adapted to the new responsibilities and functions, men of restless energy tend to become impatient at the slow pace of development and the limitations within which they have to work; their places are taken by senior officials more cautious in temperament, more content to play second fiddle even to Ministers whose sole claim to office may be that they were good party men. If we could ensure that the process of extending Governmental activity was continual, with no lengthy intermediate lulls, and that Ministers were always chosen for their energy, foresight, and determination to press forward with schemes of social improvement, then we might reasonably expect to find that the upper ranks of the Service were infused with a similar spirit.

Is there no practicable means, within the existing political framework, by which things can be improved? It has been suggested that something could be done to reduce the paralysing

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effect of House of Commons criticism (particularly in the form of Parliamentary Questions) on the whole administrative process. Everyone with experience of the British Civil Service is aware that, as Laski has said, 'one of its main ardours, to which immense energy is devoted, is the concealment of . . . blunders from the public view, and especially from the view of Parliament'.⁴⁴ Although it may be healthy, in a democratic community, to have a Service open to public criticism on any detail of its activities whenever Parliament is in session, it is obviously unhealthy that Departments should devote so large a proportion of their resources to warding off these criticisms, that policy is hampered, and that constant fear of attack on day-to-day administrative decisions should inhibit the exercise of the senior official's creative task of 'devising what ought to be done'. No wonder there is 'a tone in these public services which is discouraging to novelty, an atmosphere of birth control restrictive of new beginnings and of new growths'.⁴⁵ Whatever is done, the nature of the relationship of permanent officials to their political masters in an elected assembly must probably always set limits to the exercise of their imaginative and creative powers. The contrast between what is normally possible in public administration and in less restricted fields is equally marked, for instance, in the United States. The ideal type of successful Government administrator is 'the man who does not make a mistake, who does not embarrass his chief—ultimately the President—and who does not, himself, "stick his neck out"'.⁴⁶

(4) It is obvious that those features of the higher civil servant's attitude of mind to which most public criticism has been devoted are characteristic of the elderly. One possible remedy for this state of affairs, therefore, might be to ensure that younger men had a greater chance to reach the top before they began to display the natural tendencies of advancing years. Even then they would, of course, grow old in the Service; but at least they would do so in posts where the interest of the work kept alive some of their youthful enthusiasm. Slow promotion of the able is obviously likely to sour them, and a prolonged experience of the drudgery and relative dullness of work in the lower ranks of the hierarchy must tend to develop the Civil Service temperament in its least desirable form.

It is, of course, well known that those who are promoted from

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the ranks take longer to reach posts at all levels within the Administrative Class than is the case with their open competition colleagues. Amongst higher civil servants in 1950, for instance, there was a highly significant difference between the mean age at which promotees reached the rank of Principal (43) and Assistant Secretary (49), and the mean age at which open competition entrants had reached these two ranks (33 and 40). There was, incidentally, no significant difference between the age at which those who came from the lowest rungs of the ladder reached these ranks, and the age of their counterparts who started somewhere within the executive range; it took them longer, but they had joined the Service when they were younger. Almost every critic of the Civil Service within the last half century has pointed out the need to promote from the ranks while those concerned are still young. There has been a gradual improvement in this respect, and the latest developments should help materially to bring about what has been suggested for so long. The age-limits for the limited competitions whereby those in the lower classes of the Service have an opportunity of entering the Administrative Class at the Assistant Principal level have, since 1952, been set at 21 to 28, which means that they will only be a few years older than entrants direct from the universities. The same need, it is to be hoped, will also be borne in mind in promoting from other classes of the Service to the ranks of Principal and above. We shall be able to see how effective the new policy has been when it is possible to compare the 1950 age structure of the Higher Civil Service according to route of entry with the corresponding data for the 1960s and 1970s. At present, as can be seen from Table 29, some 73% of the Assistant Secretaries who entered by open competition or its 1919-20 equivalent are under 45 years of age, as against only 9% of those promoted from the ranks. The corresponding proportion for wartime entrants is 64%, and for transferees 30%.

What about the open competition entrants themselves? Are they spending too long in the lower ranks of the Administrative Class? Table 30 has been prepared in order that the experience of open competition entrants of the period 1909-14 may be compared with that of similar entrants in the years 1925-35. The promotion of those in the first group was affected by the 1914-18 war, and was also sometimes affected by the 1939-45 war if they attained one

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TABLE 29

AGE STRUCTURE OF ASSISTANT SECRETARIES, 1950

Age	Open Competition		Routes of Entry:				All Routes (including transfer)	
			Wartime Entrants	Promoted from Clerical or Executive				
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
60 and over	10	4.1	1	1.0	50	16.8	69	9.7
55-59	35	14.2	5	5.0	131	44.1	181	25.4
50-54	8	3.3	6	5.9	70	23.6	95	13.3
45-49	13	5.3	24	23.8	18	6.1	74	10.4
40-44	58	23.6	44	43.6	19	6.4	136	19.1
35-39	106	43.1	21	20.8	9	3.0	142	19.9
34 and under	16	6.5	—	—	—	—	16	2.2
Total	246	100.0	101	100.0	297	100.0	713	100.0

of the three highest ranks. The second group's fortunes were influenced only by the second war; in their case the figures for the two highest ranks may well be modified by promotions after 1950.

TABLE 30

AVERAGE NUMBER OF YEARS TAKEN BY OPEN COMPETITION ENTRANTS TO REACH CERTAIN RANKS

Promotion to:	1909-14 Competitions		1925-35 Competitions		Significance of Differences (t tests)
	Mean and Standard Error	Number of Cases	Mean and Standard Error	Number of Cases	
Principal	10.55 ± 0.22	140 (all before 1939)	6.18 ± 0.11	238	Significant
A.S.	19.86 ± 0.61	115 (102 before 1939)	12.36 ± 0.17	210	Significant
P.A.S. or U.S.	26.73 ± 0.49	73 (31 before 1939)	16.43 ± 0.29	81	Significant
D.S.	29.42 ± 0.92	26 (4 before 1939)	19.14 ± 0.43	22	Significant
Secretary	28.88 ± 1.20	17 (4 before 1939)	19.00 ± 1.08	4	Significant

Notes: (1) All promotions included in this Table took place before mid-1950. (2) In the case of the two highest ranks comparison between the two periods is liable to be misleading, as entrants by the 1925-35 competitions reaching these ranks after mid-1950 may raise the mean figure of number of years taken.

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Despite these unsatisfactory features, we are probably justified in concluding that the significant differences shown in the average time taken to reach the ranks of Principal and Assistant Secretary reflect a major permanent change. It used to take ten or eleven years to become a Principal, and nineteen or twenty to become an Assistant Secretary. For the entrants of 1925-35 these times have been cut to six and twelve years respectively; while in sixteen or seventeen years most of those who were going to get beyond that point had reached the rank of Under-Secretary. Though it is dangerous to forecast such matters, it seems unlikely that the relative stagnation of the twenties and early thirties in matters of promotion will be repeated; more recent entrants can probably assume that the average time they will take to reach these ranks is not likely to be greater, war or no war, than was the case with their 1925-35 predecessors.

Another way of showing the change that has taken place is to compare the age structure of those holding the three highest ranks in 1929, 1939, and 1950, as is done in Table 31. This comparison makes it clear that it is now more usual to hold high rank whilst still in your early forties than it was in 1939 or 1929. It is true that there were only 15 people under 40, and 44 between that age and 45, in these high ranks in 1950, forming 18% of the total between them. In 1939, however, there had been no one under 40, and seven under 45 or 4% of the total. And in 1929 there had been no one under 40 and three under 45 or 2% of the total. The important change that has taken place in this respect cannot wholly be attributed, however, to the recognition in recruitment and promotion policy, of the importance of securing a larger proportion of younger men at the top of the Service. Although this has undoubtedly been one element, a contributory factor has been that, owing to the 1914-18 war and its aftermath, the Service has found itself short of men in a particular age-group, and has had to promote younger men to fill this gap.

This problem of the 'lost generation' can be seen most clearly if we confine our attention to those born in the five-year period 1897 to 1901. In 1950 there were, amongst entrants by open competition or its 1919-20 equivalent, only six representatives of that age group in the three top ranks, or less than 2% of the total. Yet in 1939 and 1929 men in the corresponding age

TABLE 31

AGE STRUCTURE OF THOSE ABOVE THE RANK OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY, 1929, 1939, 1950

Age	Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries						Principal Assistant Secretaries and Under-Secretaries						All Above Assistant Secretary					
	1929		1939		1950		1929		1939		1950		1929		1939		1950	
60 and over	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
55-59	5	11.6	12	22.2	19	19.8	7	9.0	20	16.0	41	17.4	12	9.9	32	17.9	60	18.1
50-54	20	46.6	25	46.3	36	37.5	24	30.8	40	32.0	80	33.9	44	36.4	65	36.3	116	34.9
45-49	8	18.6	6	11.1	14	14.6	26	33.3	36	28.8	34	14.4	34	28.1	42	23.5	48	14.5
40-44	9	20.9	10	18.5	17	17.7	19	24.3	23	18.4	32	13.6	28	23.1	33	18.4	49	14.8
35-39	1	2.3	1	1.9	10	10.4	2	2.6	6	4.8	34	14.4	3	2.5	7	3.9	44	13.2
	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	15	6.3	—	—	—	—	15	4.5
Total	43	100.0	54	100.0	96	100.0	78	100.0	125	100.0	236	100.0	121	100.0	179	100.0	332	100.0

groups (i.e. 1886 to 1890 for 1939, and 1876 to 1880 for 1929) had formed about 20% of the total. Had there been no war in 1914-18, men born between 1897 and 1901 would have entered by the normal open competitions of 1919 to 1923. During these years, however, the Civil Service Commission was, as we have seen, engaged in recruiting by special reconstruction arrangements mainly older men, who but for the war would have entered by normal open competitions of 1915-18. In these reconstruction competitions the future requirements of the Service for Administrative Class recruits were seriously over-estimated, with the result that it was not found necessary effectively to resume normal open recruitment until 1925. By that time, of course, it was too late to bring in this 'lost generation', so that this missing group has distorted the age-structure of open competition entrants in the Service ever since. Table 29, for instance, shows that those between the ages of 50 and 54 formed only 3% of the open competition Assistant Secretaries in 1950, whilst the proportions in age groups both above and below this were higher. By the 1960s, of course, this distortion will have been eliminated by the process of retirement; but its secondary effects, the consequences of the unexpectedly rapid promotion of younger men, may show themselves for a further five or ten years after this.

The general conclusion would seem to be that recent policy in recruitment and promotion has shown a markedly greater tendency to allow people to reach high rank earlier than used to be the case. There is probably scope for some further change in the same direction, even within the limits set by the need to train direct entrants with no previous practical or theoretical knowledge either of administration in general or the machinery of the Civil Service in particular; but there has clearly been a marked improvement over the last twenty or thirty years, wherever the credit should lie, and this has taken place amongst entrants of both the main types.

(5) The over-representation of the upper and middle social strata has already been discussed in analysing the occupations of higher civil servants' fathers. A related issue has not yet been considered, however. Is there a similar over-representation of Londoners as compared with those from other parts of the country? If there were, it might have some bearing on the higher

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civil servant stereotype, for if these officials were not drawn in sufficient numbers from the mining valleys of South Wales, the steel towns of the West of Scotland, the shipbuilding areas of North-Eastern England and the cotton towns of Lancashire, this might explain some of their alleged complacency in face of such social problems as mass unemployment in the inter-war years. An analysis of the last schools attended by the higher civil servants of 1950 shows that all but 4% of them were educated in Great Britain; of these, the proportions educated within the London Postal Area, in the rest of England and Wales, and in Scotland were 26, 63 and 11% respectively. The Scottish proportion corresponds roughly to the residential distribution of the population as a whole, but the London Postal Area proportion is nearly twice as great amongst higher civil servants as it is for the population generally, if we accept school addresses as a rough guide to areas of origin. In fact, of course, most boarding-schools have addresses in the rest of England and Wales; the true proportion coming from this area is therefore probably less than 63%. With the traditional concentration of Government offices in London (apart from relatively small establishments in Edinburgh and Cardiff) it was almost inevitable that a high proportion of those promoted from the ranks should have been Londoners. With the wartime establishment, and subsequent retention, of regional offices by many Departments, the relative under-representation of the rest of England and Wales may be modified, though it is unlikely that it will be altogether eliminated. In any case, though 26% may be an over-representation of Londoners, it is hardly extensive enough to colour the whole outlook of the Higher Civil Service.

(6) Finally, if more data about the educational and social background of higher civil servants were made available from time to time, misleading generalizations would be less likely to gain currency, and public attention could more readily be focused on any genuine shortcomings of this important professional group instead of on those which no longer apply.⁴⁷ It may not be inappropriate that a study of the present type should end with a plea for more factual information, for the difficulties arising from the inadequacy of existing statistics relating to the Civil Service have been the most serious limiting factor at every stage and in every section of this enquiry. It ought not to be too difficult to assemble and

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publish, from time to time, figures showing the ranks and routes of entry of members of the Administrative Class; their distribution according to type of school and university might even be given. The Civil Service Commissioners were able, in their *84th Report*, to provide the necessary data for making certain broad comparisons between successful and unsuccessful candidates for admission to the Administrative Class in 1939 and 1948. Instead of being discontinued, this practice could with advantage be extended. In these and many other ways the provision of more adequate statistical information could increase our understanding of, and our justifiable pride in, the British Civil Service.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. J. D. Kingsley, *Representative Bureaucracy* (1944), p. 5.
2. There is scattered evidence from memoirs that the Civil Service was often not the subject's first preference. Lord Welby, we are told, 'had thoughts of being called to the Bar' (Sir Algernon West, *Contemporary Portraits* (1920), p. 160); Sir Harold Butler (*Confident Morning* (1950), p. 44) 'reluctantly decided to renounce a foreign career and to sit for the home civil service examination'; Sir Laurence Guillemard (*Trivial Fond Records* (1920), p. 8) 'had always had leanings towards the Bar, and had joined the Inner Temple'.
3. See, for instance, Robert K. Merton, 'Bureaucratic Structure and Personality' in his *Social Theory and Social Structure* (1949), p. 151.
4. Reinhard Bendix, *Higher Civil Servants in American Society* (1949), p. 17.
5. T. Bottomore, 'La mobilité sociale dans la haute administration française' (*Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie*, XI, 1952).
6. H. R. G. Greaves, *The Civil Service in the Changing State* (1947), p. 122.
7. J. D. Kingsley, *Representative Bureaucracy* (1944), p. 273.
8. H. E. Dalc, *The Higher Civil Service* (1941), p. 194.
9. Herman Finer (*The British Civil Service*, 1927) stressed the importance of the similarity in social origin between British civil servants and politicians. 'They do not jar upon each other as harshly as the German Civil Service did upon the liberal sections of the German public, Reichstag and the Universities before the War; nor as the French Civil Service does even now upon the Chamber of Deputies.'
10. E. L. Woodward, 'The Foreign Service', in J. E. McLean, *The Public Service and University Education* (1949), p. 172.

CHAPTER ONE

1. E. W. Cohen, *The Growth of the British Civil Service, 1780-1939*, p. 69.
2. E. W. Cohen, *op. cit.*, p. 118. These were the famous 'Treasury idiots'.
3. K. C. Wheare, *The Civil Service in the Constitution* (1954), p. 16.
4. Transfer from one Department to another was still, of course, comparatively rare, and remained so until after the 1914-18 war.
5. Whatever may have been the position at earlier dates, by the 1870s there seem to have been comparatively few members of aristocratic families in key positions in the Higher Civil Service. In 1871, for example, only two out of nine Heads of Departments (Treasury, Trade, Education, Inland

Revenue, Post, Home, Colonies, India, War) had fathers with hereditary titles; one was the eighth son of the second Lord Ravensworth, the other the eldest son of a Baronet. In most cases their fathers had, however, achieved a certain measure of distinction in some walk of life; this was also true of the occupants of six key posts in 1888, as shown in Chapter VIII.

6. H. E. Dale, *The Higher Civil Service* (1941).

7. J. D. Kingsley, *Representative Bureaucracy: an interpretation of the British Civil Service* (1944).

8. T. A. Critchley, *The Civil Service Today* (1951).

9. B. Monck, *How the Civil Service Works* (1952).

10. The 83rd Report relates to the calendar year 1938; the 84th is for the period 1st January 1941 to 31st March 1949, but contains some data for 1939; the 85th covers the three years from 1st April 1949 to 31st March 1952, and includes 'nominal lists' of the type mentioned above.

11. B. Monck, *How the Civil Service Works*, p. 18.

12. *Manchester Guardian*, 5th August 1937.

13. H. R. G. Greaves, *The British Constitution* (2nd edition, 1948), p. 165. In the 1954 edition of this work, figures resulting from the present enquiry have been substituted for the original ones.

14. R. H. Tawney, *Equality* (4th edition, 1952), p. 279.

15. *The Public Schools* (W.E.A. Educational Pamphlets No. 5), p. 22.

CHAPTER TWO

1. This is generally-accepted usage, though purists may argue that, strictly speaking, Ministers make policy, and no civil servant of any rank can be responsible for a policy decision.

2. Their Departmental distribution is shown in Table 1, their ranking in Table 2. The abbreviations given in parentheses are used in the Tables throughout the book.

3. In a few instances missing data had to be sought from Ministries in Northern Ireland.

CHAPTER THREE

1. It should be noticed that, as Class 1 was not open to women at this time, this description of the lower ranks of the Service omits women's work.

2. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 1st Report*, pp. 128-33.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 134-5.

4. Tomlin Commission, *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 245.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 115-22.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

8. He was Chancellor of the Exchequer at the time the new arrangements were drafted.

9. Childers Committee, *Evidence*, p. 230.

10. Childers Committee, *3rd Report*, p. iv.

11. Playfair Commission, *1st Report*, p. 18.
12. Ridley Commission, *2nd Report*, p. 26.
13. For the whole correspondence, see *Parliamentary Papers*, 1884, XLVII, pp. 429-45.
14. By accidentally attributing this episode to 1886 in her text, though her footnote reference is correct, Miss Cohen (*The Growth of the British Civil Service*, p. 142) makes the later suspension of promotions appear to be a much more abrupt sequel than was in fact the case. It should also be noted that the memorial did not relate wholly, or even mainly, to Colonial Office staff.
15. E. W. Cohen, *The Growth of the British Civil Service*, p. 148.
16. E.g. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 2nd Report*, p. 324.
17. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 3rd Report*, p. 62.
18. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 1st Report*, p. 51.
19. Childers Committee, *Evidence*, p. 292.
20. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 1st Report*, p. 30.
21. MacDonnell Commission, *2nd Appendix to 4th Report*, p. 482.
22. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 2nd Report*, p. 18.
23. Childers Committee, *Evidence*, p. 231 (Robert Lowe).
24. *Ibid.*, p. 238.
25. Haldane Commission, *Appendix to 3rd Report*, p. 103.
26. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 3rd Report*, p. 104.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 101.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
29. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 2nd Report*, pp. 451-2.
30. MacDonnell Commission, *4th Report*, p. 39.
31. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 2nd Report*, p. 471.
32. MacDonnell Commission, *2nd Appendix to 4th Report*, p. 343.
33. Playfair Commission, *Appendix to 1st Report*, p. 164.
34. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 1st Report*, pp. 119-21.
35. One isolated return (*P.P.* 1899, LXXVII) gives the proportion of appointments to Class 1 Clerkships by promotion from the Lower Division in the 13-year period 1886-98 as 18%, compared with 78% by open competition and 4% from other sources. Of the 34 promotions in this period, no fewer than 11 took place in the Admiralty.
36. MacDonnell Commission, *4th Report*, p. 59. The ratio to which they refer is slightly lower than ours because it takes no account of India Office or Post Office promotions.
37. He and his fellows had particularly strong grounds for complaint in that only on one occasion—in 1907—had the President chosen a Second Division Clerk when exercising his complete discretion in the appointment of Junior Examiners.
38. MacDonnell Commission, *2nd Appendix to 4th Report*, p. 479.
39. The latter consisted of senior administrative situations in the Civil Service proper, either held direct from the Crown or declared professional for the purposes of Section IV of the Superannuation Act, 1859; they were usually, but not always, filled by those who had entered the Service by one of the normal routes.

40. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 2nd Report*, p. 218.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 362.
42. MacDonnell Commission, *4th Report*, p. 58.
43. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 2nd Report*, pp. 200-12.
44. MacDonnell Commission, *4th Report*, p. 40.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
47. Ramsay Reorganization Committee, *Interim Report*, p. 8.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
49. Lytton Committee, *3rd Report*, paragraph 31.
50. Tomlin Commission, *Evidence*, p. 23.
51. Tomlin Commission, *Report*, p. 77.
52. H. Finer, *The British Civil Service* (revised edition, 1937), p. 107.
53. *Political Quarterly*, II, p. 509.
54. Accidentally referred to by Herman Finer as Sir Arthur Flynn.
55. Sir Albert Flynn, *Problems of the Civil Service* (1928), p. 30.
56. Tomlin Commission, *Evidence*, p. 135.
57. The other was Sir Horace Wilson, Ministry of Labour.
58. Tomlin Commission, *Evidence*, p. 174.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 689.
60. Tomlin Commission, *Evidence*, p. 144.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 813.
62. Professor Chorley in *Agenda*, III, p. 120.
63. He himself lacked a university education, but had succeeded in the Class 1 examination.
64. Sir Albert Flynn, *Problems of the Civil Service*, pp. 31-2.
65. Tomlin Commission, *Evidence of Society of Civil Servants*, p. 4.
66. *Ibid.*, pp. 35-6.
67. MacDonnell Commission, *4th Report*, p. 119.
68. Tomlin Commission, *Report*, p. 31.
69. H. R. G. Greaves, *The Civil Service in the Changing State* (1947), p. 18.
70. The latter figure includes 71 people (other than ex-I.C.S. men) who entered by reconstruction or normal competitions for Principals.
71. *84th Report of the Civil Service Commissioners*, p. 60.
72. This is an unpublished figure supplied by the Commission.
73. B. Monck, *How the Civil Service Works*, p. 18.
74. *84th Report of Civil Service Commissioners*, p. 31.
75. *Ibid.*

CHAPTER FOUR

1. The best treatment of the Northcote-Trevelyan reforms in their historical setting is in Professor K. C. Wheare's recent lecture, *The Civil Service in the Constitution* (1954).

2. In the tabulations in the present study the very rare cases of people already in the Service who succeeded in the open competition for Class 1 Clerkships or Administrative Class posts, are treated as direct entry from outside and not as promotion.

3. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 3rd Report*, p. 227.
4. Leathes Committee, *Report*, p. 13.
5. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 2nd Report*, p. 76.
6. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 3rd Report*, p. 265.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 210.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 207.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 241.
10. MacDonnell Commission, *2nd Appendix to 4th Report*, p. 44.
11. Leathes Committee, *Report*, p. 13.
12. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 1st Report*, p. 89.
13. The Leathes Committee.
14. Of these 203 men, only 197 actually took up administrative appointments in the Home Civil Service; the latter figure is therefore used in the tabulations in the present study.
15. MacDonnell Commission, *4th Report*, p. 41.
16. Leathes Committee, *Report*, p. 17.
17. MacDonnell Commission, *4th Report*, p. 42.
18. Leathes Committee, *Report*, p. 8.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
20. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 1st Report*, p. 98.
21. Leathes Committee, *Report*, p. 11.
22. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 1st Report*, p. 99.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 100.
24. MacDonnell Commission, *2nd Appendix to 4th Report*, p. 512.
25. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 1st Report*, p. 13.
26. MacDonnell Commission, *2nd Appendix to 4th Report*, p. 536.
27. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 2nd Report*, p. 489.
28. MacDonnell Commission, *4th Report*, p. 41.
29. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 3rd Report*, p. 215.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 271.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 207.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
33. Acland Committee, *Interim Report*, p. 46.
34. Leathes Committee, *Report*, p. 17.
35. *Ibid.*
36. Tomlin Commission, *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 1526.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 1521.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
40. Leathes Committee, *Report*, p. 19.
41. Tomlin Commission, *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 1268.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 1524.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 1303.
45. Tomlin Commission, *Statement of Staff Side of National Whitley Council*, Section 2, p. 33.
46. Tomlin Commission, *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 1285.

47. Tomlin Commission, *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 92.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 673.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 653.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 652.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 659.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 663.
53. Tomlin Commission, *Report*, p. 70.
54. Tomlin Commission, *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 65.
55. *Ibid.*
56. Sir Philip Hartog and E. C. Rhodes, *An Examination of Examinations* (1935), pp. 35-41.
57. *Public Administration*, XV, p. 436.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 306.
59. H. Finer, *The British Civil Service* (1937 edition), p. 104.
60. For an explanation of this term, see p. 119.
61. Significance at the 1% level is referred to throughout the present study as 'highly significant', and at the 5% level as 'significant'.
62. In one or two combinations, Clarendon boys showed a tendency to greater success than others, but it was not large enough to be statistically significant. Kingsley (*Representative Bureaucracy*, p. 151) thought that there was a marked tendency for Clarendon boys to outstrip their colleagues in the race to the top of the administrative hierarchy; his figures are, however, incomplete, and have not been tested for significance. The Civil Service Commissioners have kindly given access to certain unpublished Tables prepared for the Fleming Committee. In these Tables the ranks reached in the early 1940s by competition entrants of the ten years 1905-14 and the thirteen years 1925-37 are compared with the type of school attended. They show no significant difference as between those who had been to boarding and day schools, or public and other schools. Both this and the Kingsley material is less reliable than that used in the present analysis, in that the time-interval between entry and promotion to a particular rank is only very loosely estimated.
63. There were 333 candidates for administrative posts in the Home Civil Service (excluding Northern Ireland) in that year. In the light of the requirements of the Service and the reactions of candidates, the top 76 competitors qualified for the offer of a post at some time during the ensuing months; for our present purpose these 76 are described as 'successful'.
64. The discussion in this and the following paragraphs, so far as it relates to official policy or opinion, is based upon the published *Memorandum by the Civil Service Commissioners on the Use of the Civil Service Selection Board in the Reconstruction Competitions* (1951).
65. Tomlin Commission, *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 65.
66. Some may feel that the term 'extended interview' is a misleading one to apply to the series of tests (lasting two or three days) undergone by those who visited the Manor House, Stoke D'Abernon, and its non-residential London successor. This is, however, the terminology employed by the Civil Service Commissioners themselves. It should be noted, in this connection, that the function of C.I.S.S.B. was to *advise* the Final Selection Board; the award of the

mark that was published, and the final decision, were the responsibility of the latter, and in one sense the whole programme of tests and exercises was designed to make this final interview more fruitful.

67. P. E. Vernon and J. B. Parry, *Personnel Selection in the British Forces* (1949), p. 54.

68. P. E. Vernon and J. B. Parry, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

69. *Occupational Psychology*, XXII, p. 206.

70. *Ibid.*, XXIV, p. 94.

71. In the reconstruction competitions, candidates from Headmasters' Conference Boarding-Schools obtained higher marks at the Final Selection Board than did those from Secondary Day and Co-educational Schools. Not everyone would, however, agree with Dr. Vernon's interpretation of this result. 'This result suggests that such schools attract, or produce, superior candidates, since C.I.S.S.B. staff consciously attempted not to be influenced by their reputations' (*Occupational Psychology*, XXIV, p. 80).

72. *Memorandum by the Civil Service Commissioners on the Use of the Civil Service Selection Board in the Reconstruction Competitions*, p. 25.

73. *Public Administration*, XV, p. 306.

74. *Memorandum by the Civil Service Commissioners on the Use of the Civil Service Selection Board in the Reconstruction Competitions*, p. 25.

75. In this connection it may be noted that it has always been accepted that aptitude tests, if they are to be fair to all candidates, must be so designed that previous experience of the exercise will not affect the result.

76. The Board has a different title—Final Selection Board—in the case of Method II, where the function is selection instead of merely awarding a mark.

77. Except where otherwise specified, the following account is based on the 84th Report of the Commissioners, pp. 33-4, and on the *Memorandum by the Commissioners on the use of C.I.S.S.B. in the Reconstruction Competitions*, p. 23.

78. H. E. Dale, *The Higher Civil Service*, p. 136.

79. *Manchester Guardian*, 26th July 1951.

80. Tomlin Commission, *Minutes of Evidence*, p. 1712.

81. 'Journalism' may sometimes have been a euphemism for 'free-lance work until something better comes along'.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. P.P. 1890, LVIII, p. 163.

2. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 2nd Report*, p. 490.

3. This estimate is arrived at by piecing together scraps of material from the whole of the published MacDonnell Commission evidence.

4. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 2nd Report*, p. 218.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 241-2.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 261.

7. 'The late Secretary and the present Secretary, the late Accountant General, and the present Accountant General; the late Legal Adviser.'

8. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 2nd Report*, pp. 264-5.

9. MacDonnell Commission, *2nd Appendix to 4th Report*, pp. 83-9.
10. MacDonnell Commission, *4th Report*, p. 44.
11. Civil Service Commissioners, *Annual Reports* for 1925-38.
12. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 2nd Report*, p. 412.
13. *Public Administration*, XVI, p. 289.
14. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 2nd Report*, p. 218.
15. Tomlin Commission, *Evidence*, p. 1040.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 1674.
17. Tomlin Commission, *Report*, p. 64.
18. Bridgeman Committee, *Report*, p. 39.
19. Tomlin Commission, *Evidence*, p. 1175.
20. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 2nd Report*, pp. 445-7.
21. Tomlin Commission, *Report*, p. 52.
22. B. Monck, *How the Civil Service Works*, p. 42.
23. At least since the reforms of the 1870s, it never seems to have been important. Some interesting figures are given in an isolated return (*P.P.* 1899, LXXVII) showing the nature of Class 1 appointments in the thirteen-year period 1886-98. Only 4% of these appointments were from sources other than promotion or the Class 1 open competition, and of the eight exceptional cases involved one was a colonial official, one a selected candidate for the Indian Civil Service, one an Attaché in the Diplomatic Service and two were Foreign Office Clerks.

CHAPTER SIX

1. Fleming Committee, *Report*, p. 25.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
3. See Chapter VIII.
4. This list is the same as Caradog Jones's P₁ class of public schools in his study of Cambridge Alumni (*British Journal of Sociology*, I, No. 2), except for the exclusion of three predominantly day schools.
5. *84th Report of Civil Service Commissioners*, pp. 84-90.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 74-7.
7. Described in the Tables as 'Oxford and another', 'Cambridge and another'.
8. See Table 22.
9. The ratio between Edinburgh and the others was 3 to 7 in 1950 (University Grants Committee, *Returns . . . 1950-51*, p. 24).
10. See also his interesting article, 'Edinburgh Civil Servants, 1896-1944. A Tribute in Memory of D. P. Heatley', in *University of Edinburgh Journal*, XIII (1945), pp. 111-20. It should be noted that the figures given above include Edinburgh graduates who subsequently went to Oxford or Cambridge; this explains why the 1919-39 figure differs from that in Table 23.
11. I owe this suggestion to Professor G. D. H. Cole.
12. Ministry of Education, *Report for 1950*, p. 240.
13. University Grants Committee, *Returns . . . 1950-51*, p. 7.
14. *Memorandum on the use of the Civil Service Selection Board*, p. 25.

15. *84th Report of Civil Service Commissioners*, pp. 75-6. Strictly speaking, the figure on which this percentage is based includes *all* candidates for the Home Administrative Class and the *unsuccessful* candidates for the Indian and Burma Civil Services.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. See pp. 18-9.

2. This explains why the total of those above the rank of Assistant Secretary in 1950 is given as 331 in some Tables and 332 in others.

3. D. V. Glass, *Social Mobility in Britain* (1954).

4. Professor G. D. H. Cole discusses the merits and defects of the standard social class groupings in an article in *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie*, XV 1954.

5. D. V. Glass, *Social Mobility in Britain*, pp. 189-94.

6. Certain very broad comparisons can be drawn between the social origin of the British Higher Civil Service in 1939, as shown by our figures, and of higher civil servants in the Federal administration of the United States in 1940. We are told that there were some 428 such officials at that date, father's occupation being ascertainable in only 180 of these cases (Reinhard Bendix, *Higher Civil Servants in American Society* (1949), p. 26). Of these 180 higher civil servants, 10% were the sons of manual workers, or about the same proportion as in Britain. Those with fathers in the professions formed less than 30% of the total; the proportion in Britain was 45%. The biggest difference seems to have been in the farming group. About 30% of the American officials had fathers who were full-time or part-time farmers; the British proportion was less than 2%. Other comparisons are made difficult by uncertainties as to the type of people included in the American figures. The general contrast with the predominantly rural and small-town origin of the Federal administrators is, however, sufficiently clear.

7. We must, of course, avoid falling into the error of supposing that, if educational opportunities were, in theory, equally open to the talented children from all social strata, then the father's-occupation pattern of a Higher Civil Service to which access was unrestricted would approximate to that of the occupied male population as a whole. Nearly ten years have now passed since the 1944 Education Act led to the adoption of a policy of 'full competition' for grammar school entry. Mrs. Jean Floud, in some very interesting researches the results of which are to be published shortly, has studied, *inter alia*, the effects of this on the social origin of grammar school pupils in two contrasting areas. She finds that 'neither in South West Hertfordshire, where manual workers account for some 65% of the occupied population, nor in Middlesbrough where they account for as many as 85%, do their children represent more than 45-50% of the annual entry to the grammar schools even under conditions of full competition'. These facts, of course, reflect the use of intelligence tests in the selection procedure and the social distribution of measured intelligence, a highly technical and controversial issue that cannot be pursued here. On the whole question, see J. Floud, F. M. Martin and A. H. Halsey, *Educational Opportunity and Social Selection in Britain* (1955).

8. The relationship between type of *university* attended and social origin is not, of course, equally close. The range of social strata from which Oxford and Cambridge draw their students is certainly much wider than it used to be. In a recent article Mr. Helsby, First Civil Service Commissioner, gives some new figures bearing on this point (*Political Quarterly*, XXV, p. 331). Of the 52 successful candidates in the 1953 open competition for entry to the Administrative Class, 12, he tells us, 'came from working-class homes, 17 from lower middle-class homes (small shopkeepers, insurance clerks, primary-school teachers, etc.) and 23 from middle-class homes. Of the dozen recruits of working-class origin seven were educated at Oxford or Cambridge, and eight got first-class honours degrees. When analysed in this way, the figures lend no support to the suggestion that the higher levels of the service tend to be recruited from a particular stratum of society. On the contrary, they appear rather to illustrate the extent to which university education has now become available to all young people of real ability, not least at Oxford and Cambridge, and to suggest that the Commission need not fear that emphasis on university education (e.g. as the criterion of eligibility under method 11) will unduly restrict the field of choice.' Mr. Helsby's own figures, however, when analysed in a slightly different way, do not support the view that there has ceased to be any association between social origin and type of university attended. For though 58% of the successful working-class candidates came from Oxford or Cambridge, 79% of *all* successful candidates did so. Of the successful candidates educated at Oxford or Cambridge, only 17% were working-class; of those educated elsewhere, no fewer than 45% were working-class. This is very much what we should expect, and confirms the evidence in a recent P.E.P. Broadsheet ('Background of the University Student', 8th November 1954). There it is shown that, amongst male students entering 'Camford' in 1952-3, only some 10% were the sons of manual workers, as against 25% in 'Rising University College', 32% in 'Greentown' and 42% in 'Welsh College'. The relative failure of the open competition to attract and select candidates from universities other than Oxford and Cambridge is still, therefore, tending to deprive the Administrative Class of recruits from the lower social strata.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. Sir Algernon West, *Contemporary Portraits* (1920), and the later editions of *Men of the Time* were also consulted. It was Professor Robson's idea that a study on the lines of the present chapter might usefully be undertaken.

2. Ridley Commission, *2nd Report*, p. 285.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 292.

CHAPTER NINE

1. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 1st Report*, p. 135.

2. Hilda Martindale, *Women Servants of the State, 1870-1938*, p. 48.

3. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 2nd Report*, p. 65.

4. MacDonnell Commission, *2nd Appendix to 4th Report*, p. 142.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 367.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 371.

7. MacDonnell Commission, *2nd Appendix to 4th Report*, p. 143.
8. MacDonnell Commission, *Appendix to 1st Report*, p. 82.
9. MacDonnell Commission, *2nd Appendix to 4th Report*, p. 372. Some twenty years later at least one such case did in fact arise; the woman concerned was, however, made of stern stuff, and now holds one of the senior posts in the Higher Civil Service.
10. Though none of these women was *described* as Principal Assistant Secretary, two of them had salaries of £1,200, which was the same figure as the lower limit of the man's Principal Assistant Secretary scale.
11. Tomlin Commission, *Evidence*, p. 1655.
12. Hilda Martindale, *op. cit.*, p. 107.
13. Tomlin Commission, *Evidence*, p. 467.
14. The Raven Committee on Women's Questions, reporting in March 1934.
15. Hilda Martindale, *op. cit.*, p. 157.
16. Tomlin Commission, *Evidence*, p. 1485.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 1689-91.
18. In the Tomlin Commission's *Report* (pp. 115-19) agreement is expressed with some cases of exclusion and disagreement with others. The general policy recommended was 'a fair field and no favour'.
19. *Public Administration*, I, p. 355.
20. Tomlin Commission, *Evidence*, p. 75.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 1693.
22. Still described as Assistant Secretary, though paid a higher salary.
23. Dame Evelyn Sharp; subsequently a second woman, Dame Marjorie Cox, rose to this rank (she retired in August 1954).
24. *Public Administration*, XVI, p. 289.
25. *Political Quarterly*, VII, p. 204.

CHAPTER TEN

1. Sir A. M. Carr-Saunders and P. A. Wilson, *The Professions* (1933), p. 244.
2. Sir Edward Bridges, *Portrait of a Profession* (1950), p. 10.
3. Sir A. M. Carr-Saunders and P. A. Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 286.
4. The corresponding legal restrictions in the United States are said, however, to have contributed towards the 'second class status' of the Federal Administrator (Reinhard Bendix, *Higher Civil Servants in American Society* (1949), p. 112).
5. Reinhard Bendix, *Higher Civil Servants in American Society* (1949), p. 90.
6. R. W. Rawlings, *The Civil Service and the People* (1945), discusses (pp. 61-71) and lists (pp. 160-2) Civil Service staff organizations, but makes no mention of the First Division Association.
7. Graham Wallas, *Men and Ideas* (1940), p. 128.
8. Tomlin Commission, *Appendix VIII to Minutes of Evidence*, p. 33.
9. *Evening Standard* (London), 5th January 1954.
10. H. E. Dale, *The Higher Civil Service*, p. 51.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

13. Reinhard Bendix, *Higher Civil Servants in American Society* (1949), p. 47.
14. *Papers, originally printed in 1850, respecting the Emoluments of Persons in the Permanent Employment of the Government as compared with those of Persons in the Employment of Joint Stock Companies, Bankers, Merchants, etc.: and three Papers on the Superannuation Question* (1856). The British Museum copy has the Press Mark C.T.229(7).
15. Tomlin Commission, *Minutes of Evidence*, Appendix VIII.
16. *Parliamentary Papers*, 1945-6, XVIII, p. 132.
17. Chorley Committee, *Report* (1949), p. 6.
18. It is worth noting that, within the Administrative Class, financial discrimination against the higher grades began with the cost-of-living bonus scheme adopted in 1920, continued with the imposition of the super-cut in 1921, and had its most recent manifestation in the system of 'pay addition' introduced in the 1950s.
19. The Extra Duty Allowance (amounting to 8% on the basic scale for Principals) is intended to compensate for having to work more than a 42-hour week.
20. This was stressed in the First Division Association's evidence before the Tomlin Commission.
21. *Times Educational Supplement*, 11th April 1952.
22. *Radio Times*, 23rd April 1954.
23. Perhaps because he is rather an unexciting figure, believed to lead a somewhat uneventful life (hence the choice by R. W. Harris of *Not So Humdrum* as the title of his 1939 autobiography), he has comparatively rarely been characterized in fiction. There is, of course, Dickens' literary attack on the Circumlocution Office in *Little Dorrit* (1857); and Trollope's Sir Gregory Hardlines (*The Three Clerks*, 1857) who was modelled on Sir Charles Trevelyan. Arnold Bennett's *Mr. Prohack* (1922) is a kindly portrait of a senior Treasury official, underpaid, hating to be hurried, who inherits a fortune but finds it impossible to accustom himself to a life of idleness. For a discussion of public servants in fiction, see an article by Humbert Wolfe in *Public Administration*, Vol. II.
24. Sir Thomas Farrer is said to have been its originator. 'Why are Government clerks like the Fountains in Trafalgar Square? Because they play all day from ten till four' (Sir Algernon West, *Contemporary Portraits* (1920), p. 23).
25. See, for instance, G. D. H. Cole, *Essays in Social Theory* (1950), pp. 224-43; H. R. G. Greaves, *The Civil Service in the Changing State* (1947), pp. 46-66; H. J. Laski, introduction to J. P. W. Mallalieu, *Passed to You, Please* (1942); and 'A Temporary Civil Servant' in *Political Quarterly*, XV, pp. 93-6.
26. A. L. Rowse, *The End of an Epoch* (1947), p. 121.
27. H. E. Dale, *The Higher Civil Service*, p. 74.
28. A. L. Rowse, *op. cit.*, p. 121.
29. 'The British Civil Service' in J. E. McLean, *The Public Service and University Education* (1949), p. 158.
30. H. E. Dale, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-6.
31. *The Times*, 24th November 1953.

32. B. Monck, *How the Civil Service Works* (1952), p. 5.
33. *The Reform of the Higher Civil Service* (Fabian Society, 1947).
34. O. R. McGregor in *Political Quarterly*, XXII (1951), p. 162.
35. H. Finer, *The British Civil Service* (revised edition, 1937), p. 94.
36. Graham Wallas, *Men and Ideas* (1940), p. 114.
37. Rowland Egger, 'A Second View: An American Administrative Class?' in J. E. McLean, *The Public Service and University Education* (1949), pp. 231-2.
38. *Times Educational Supplement*, 14th November 1952.
39. Barlow Committee, *Report* (1945), p. 12.
40. H. J. Laski, quoting an unnamed student, in his introduction to J. P. W. Mallalieu, *Passed to You, Please* (1942), pp. 15-16.
41. Paul Appleby, 'An American View of the British Experience' in J. E. McLean, *The Public Service and University Education* (1949), p. 181.
42. As industrial units become larger, the difference between the attitude of mind of the business executive and the higher civil servant naturally tends to become less marked.
43. A. L. Rowse, *The End of an Epoch* (1947), p. 121. S. E. Finer (*A Primer of Public Administration*, 1950, p. 121), speaking of the Chadwicks, the Trevellyans, the Stephens and the Morants, says 'they nagged and drove and beat this country along the road of social progress, and everybody remembers them with *reminiscent* gratitude . . . but what Cabinet would want a Service alive and bursting with them?'
44. Introduction to J. P. W. Mallalieu, *Passed to You, Please* (1942), p. 7.
45. *Agenda*, III (1944), p. 113.
46. Robert C. Lane, 'Businessmen and Bureaucrats' in *Social Forces*, XXXII (1953), p. 148.
47. Mr. Gilbert Harding, for example, gave the impression in the course of a broadcast discussion ('We Beg to Differ', 24th March 1952) that virtually all the senior officials in certain Government Departments were Wykehamists.

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- (2) Standard works of reference, as well as directories, lists and registers of most types.
- (3) Statutes, Bills, Orders in Council, Regulations, Returns, Estimates (as well as Reports of the Select Committee on Estimates and of the Committee on National Expenditure).
- (4) Guides to employment in the Civil Service, specimen examination papers and the like.
- (5) Publications solely concerned with civil service superannuation.
- (6) Political, social and economic histories (including histories of the world wars), general studies in administrative or constitutional law and history.
- (7) Biographies of individual statesmen, except where particularly relevant.
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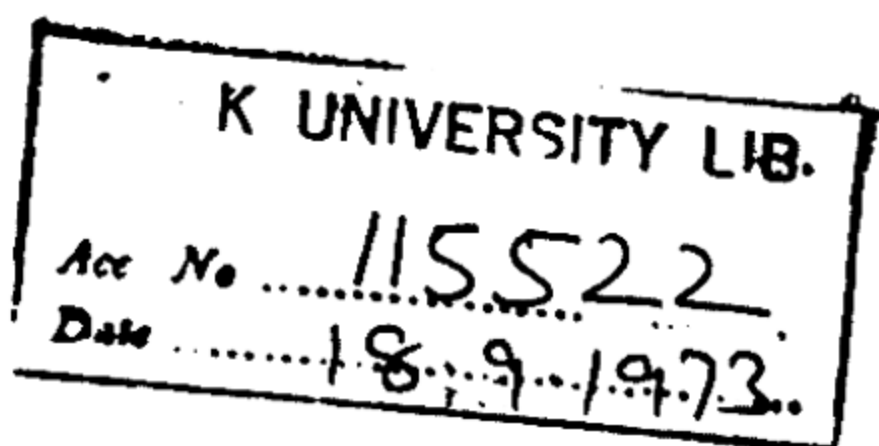
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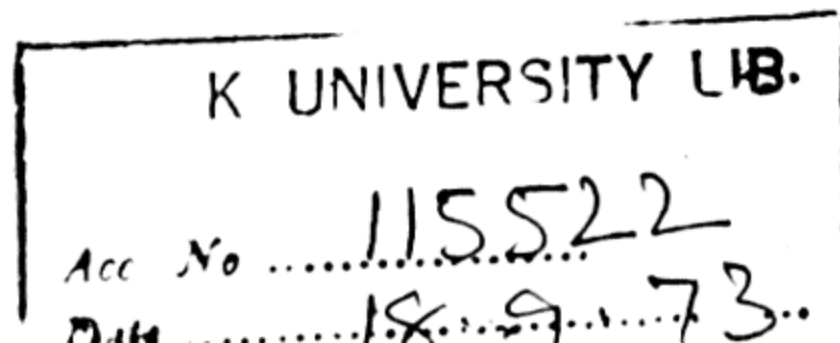
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